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Mardi
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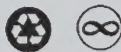
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 7 August 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 7 août 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CAP AND TRADE CANCELLATION ACT, 2018

Loi de 2018 annulant le programme de plafonnement et d'échange

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 2, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'élaboration d'un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d'échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today with a heavy heart: that in 2018 the costs of climate change are so clear to our health, our economy, our pocketbook and our way of life that we are debating a bill to dismantle Ontario's climate action plan.

This morning, literally parts of Ontario are burning as we speak, and government MPPs have been cheering the dismantling of Ontario's climate plan. So I ask the members opposite to think long and hard about the actions you're about to take.

I have children—two wonderful teenage daughters, so full of life, both excited and worried about their future. I think about their future a lot. It was my own fear and hope for their future that motivated me to work so hard for so long to occupy this seat. I refuse to make ice storms and hurricanes, forest fires and polar vortexes, floods and droughts the new normal without putting up a fight. They deserve better. Your children deserve better. Your grandchildren deserve better.

So I'm willing to work across party lines with you to develop a climate action plan. I believe it is irresponsible and reckless to take a sledgehammer to Ontario's existing climate plan with no replacement plan in sight, especially given the urgency of the crisis that we face.

A year ago, I praised the Conservative Party for having the vision to support pollution pricing, for moving Ontario past a debate of whether we should act on climate to a conversation about what is the best form of action on climate. Sadly, that Conservative Party no longer exists.

The current Conservative Party clearly has no climate action plan. I know that there are members on the opposite side who understand the crisis we face and want to take action on climate change—people who want to reduce waste, diversify our energy systems, improve health, and reduce the costs that climate change is imposing on us. I'm asking those members to stand up and be on the right side of history.

I too am not a big fan of the Liberals' cap-and-trade system. I thought it was wrong to give the largest emitters free pollution permits. I support using pollution pricing revenues to put money in people's pockets—literally put money in people's pockets with carbon dividend cheques to help them manage the transition to a low-carbon economy and to help them to afford to lower their energy bills. But the sad truth is that an inadequate plan is better than no plan at all.

So, I ask: What has happened to responsible governance? What has happened to making evidence-based policy decisions based on truth? The government's actions will have real-world consequences. We feel the effects of climate change in our bank accounts right now. Insurable losses, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, in 2016 accounted to \$5 billion across Canada. Government disaster relief fund payouts have risen from about \$100 million per year two decades ago to now annually \$2 billion. In this year alone, the province of Ontario spent almost \$700 million on insurable losses due to extreme weather events.

We cannot afford not to act. So let's be clear: 17 of the 18 hottest years on record have been since 2001. Rising temperatures are negatively affecting our health. As a matter of fact, nearly 100 people have died in Quebec this year alone due to extreme heat. New research is showing that even a one-degree increase in average temperatures increases depression, suicide and violence. Rising temperatures are leading to increases in diseases such as Lyme disease.

Failure to act hurts our health. It also hurts our economy. Not taking advantage of the \$7-trillion global economic opportunity in the clean economy will hurt Ontario's economy. As a matter of fact, pollution pricing works. The best-performing provinces in Canada economically are all the provinces with a price on pollution.

So I ask the members opposite to stand up, do the right thing and put forward a plan before dismantling our existing plan.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Calandra: It's curious, always, to hear some of the members of the opposition talk about the current cap-and-trade carbon tax as a solution to climate change. It has become quite clear that, in fact, it is not. It is just the opposite.

To have a system that allows people to pollute as long as they buy credits to offset that pollution is not a plan. It does nothing to clean up the environment. All it does is take money out of the pocket of hard-working Ontarians and redistributes it to other people. But it allows the polluter to continue to pollute. How the heck is that an answer to the problems that we're facing? To hear members opposite get up constantly during this debate and somehow use the forest fires and the troubles that we're seeing in some parts of this province as the rationale for taxing our biggest job creators is actually quite sad.

There is a problem with climate change, obviously. We have to address that problem. That goes without saying. But there are solutions, and there always have been solutions. It was a Conservative government—the Mike Harris government, of course—that put a plan in place to end coal generation, which ended the smog days, by bringing nuclear power back online. It was the previous Conservative government that brought a lot of our natural heritage under protection, whether it was the Oak Ridges moraine planning act or the protection of some of the Rouge parklands.

0910

There are different solutions to this problem, but the worst possible solution for jobs and economic growth—and for the environment, more importantly—is to allow people to continue to pollute as long as they offset that pollution by buying credits to do so. Anybody who thinks that is the right solution hasn't looked back at what has been successful, whether it's the acid rain accord that was done by Prime Minister Mulroney, or previous governments that have brought in direct measures to protect our environment and that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: Just to the member opposite from Markham–Stouffville talking about allowing polluters to pollute—it's misleading, talking about “allowing to pollute”; it's polluting with a cost. You can't have a government talking about the free market and how business works not understand that having an extra cost makes it a disincentive to pollute. When you have the extra fee, then you become incentivized to be cost-effective against your competitors who don't have the fee and who are more carbon-effective. That's the system at work. You can't turn a blind eye to it.

Essentially, as the member from Guelph said, there are parts of Ontario on fire. I think he minimized it, because

there are 42 large fires, and 24 of those are out of control. That speaks to a lot. There are very few scientists who now say that climate change is not real. We kind of laugh at them now and, hopefully, move forward from the old days where people thought maybe they were legitimate.

The fire I want to talk about right now is Parry Sound 33. Parry Sound 33 is just south of my riding of Sudbury, near Parry Sound, obviously. Most people, when I tell them I'm from Sudbury, usually say, “Have you ever been to Killarney?” which actually isn't in Sudbury; it's south of Sudbury. But it is beautiful, and most people know Killarney because of the stunning beauty of it. Killarney makes most of its money through tourism because of the beauty and the fishing and everything that's available there. Killarney has been evacuated because of this fire. My in-laws have a camp in Noëlville, which is just out-side of Parry Sound. When you turn up the highway, you go through Alban, and Alban right now is on evacuation notice. My in-laws have been there for 45 years—at their camp—and every day this summer you can smell smoke in the air, which has never happened before.

The issue here isn't what form of cap-and-trade or what form of green energy we move to; it's that the government doesn't have a plan in place. It isn't “tear everything down or burn it to the ground like Parry Sound 33.” Have a plan in place before you burn it down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Our government was elected on a simple promise: to be for the people. During the election campaigning when I was knocking on doors—Mississauga East–Cooksville is a riding that's made up of a lot of senior citizens. They are on fixed incomes. It is very sad to hear from them, “Kaleed, at the end of the day, we don't know if we have enough funds to either heat our house or put food on the table.” These are the seniors who have given us so much, who have worked extremely hard, and yet, they are unable to make ends meet.

Over the weekend, actually, I was just speaking with some of my friends and some small businesses. We were having a conversation about this cap-and-trade program. I said that, at the end of the day, if you ask the organizations or corporations to pay this tax, somehow they have to pass it on to the consumers, the endusers. It's not fair to the endusers. Why do we have to penalize these individuals or the seniors who are just trying to make ends meet?

While we understand the challenges that climate change presents, a regressive tax is not the solution to these challenges. We have to come up with a plan to make sure that these additional taxes that we are imposing on corporations should not be the way of moving forward.

I'm very proud to tell my constituents that the Ontario carbon tax era is over, because, as we say, promise made, promise kept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I don't think I've had an opportunity to express in the Legislature and to congratulate you on your Deputy Speaker position here in the House, in the chair. You certainly do fit the role very well, in my opinion.

I'm here to contribute to this debate on Bill 4, because the government decided that they're going to cancel climate change. Yes, in their platform, that was one of their—I don't call it a promise; I call it misleading, misguided ideas of how to help the environment.

In London–Fanshawe, people have reached out to us. Finch auto dealership, a very large dealership in London—in southwestern Ontario, as a matter of fact—called me and talked about how they are cancelling their eco car program. They had 14 orders on the books and now those people have backed out. The dealer called personally and he said, “You know, we have to take time to educate consumers in order to get them on board to buy these eco cars.” It's about a year's process; they are on order. There's a lot of faith that the consumers put into the dealership representative in order to commit to the eco car.

What's going to happen when people drive more eco cars because you have an actual example of someone buying one? They talk to their neighbours. More people buy them. It's good for the environment. It's good for jobs. It's good for the auto industry.

This dealership wanted to know from this government what they were going to do to help the auto sector because of this loss to their revenue. They had a strategic plan for two to three years based on this program in the climate change. It is concerning. This government hasn't come up with a plan. They haven't told us what they're going to do. People really don't appreciate this kind of governance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Back to the member from Guelph for a wrap.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and you do look good in the chair this morning after a long weekend.

I just want to say to the member from Markham–Stouffville that I do agree that the previous government's climate plan was inadequate, but an inadequate plan is better than no plan at all.

I will have to say to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville who talked about fairness: I'll tell you what's not fair. It's not fair to our children and future generations that we're not tackling the biggest crisis our generation faces. It's not fair that we're going to subject people to the increased cost in their insurance bills to cover climate change. It's not fair that more government money is going to have to be spent in repairing infrastructure that's lost due to extreme weather events.

I want to say to the members opposite, there are about three tools we can use to tackle the climate crisis. One is markets. The member from Sudbury talked about the way in which pollution pricing creates a market. As a matter of fact, most economists would argue that putting a price on carbon pollution is actually the most conservative

approach to tackling the climate crisis. It appears the government is taking that tool out of the toolbox.

The member from London–Fanshawe talked about another tool that could be used and that's subsidies. We can subsidize people to lower their carbon footprint. But the government has taken that tool out of the toolbox by cancelling the GreenON program.

That leaves us with another tool and that's command and control economics. I would be surprised to see a Conservative government implement that. That's something you might expect from the NDP but not from the Conservatives. Unfortunately, that's about the only tool they have left in the toolbox.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? Wakey, wakey. The member from Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My coffee hasn't hit me yet.

Before I begin, I just wanted to mention that today is my husband's birthday and I just wanted to wish him a very happy birthday. I wish I was there with him, but we'll celebrate this weekend. He's survived me for 10 years and hopefully another 20 or 30 years longer.

I'm pleased to rise today to continue the debate regarding Bill 4, the proposed Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. This act was introduced by the Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

0920

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, everyone is aware of the challenges that we face together as a society. This is something that is going to impact all of us, especially when it comes to climate change. We all care about the environment, no matter our political background, and there is nothing partisan about that. However, where we part ways with the members of the opposition and the independent members is how best to protect and conserve the environment. It's not that we don't believe in climate change; we do, and we know that we have to do something about it. But the fact of the matter is, taxing people for the sake of taxing them, just to say that we're doing something in the name of climate change, isn't the right way, because not only is it disrespectful to taxpayer dollars but it's also ignoring the underlying and root cause of the problem at hand.

If we really want to tackle climate change in an effective way that is going to not just make a difference now but also help future generations, we have to find out what we can do to adapt and modernize. Just taxing people isn't going to do anything because, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, when you look at global emissions, 70% of those global emissions come from the activities of multinational corporations. Ontario itself, and the people of Ontario, are responsible for less than 1% of total global emissions, so even if we were going to go down to zero, it wouldn't make a difference in the long run. So why are we taxing Ontarians? Why are we making them go broke?

I know, Mr. Speaker, that on the other side they're going to come back and say, “Well, Ontario's emissions

are the highest per capita” or “per person.” That may be the case, but that’s because the reality that we are facing here in Ontario is much different than many European countries or many developing countries or industrialized countries that have a high-density population and rely on public transit.

I’m going to give my riding of Carleton as an example. Over 50% of the people in Carleton do not have access to public transit. They literally cannot get to where they need to go if they do not drive. Internet connection is just as bad, so good luck getting an Uber, and the Uber is probably just as expensive as, if not more than, a taxi.

So, Mr. Speaker, do those people have to suffer? Do those people who have no choice but to drive their cars to get to work, to go to school, to go to the doctor, to make sure that they’re not living in isolation, so they can go to community events, and have no way to get there except through driving—are we penalizing them? Is that fair? Or do we look at something more holistic? Do we look at long-term solutions? Do we look at ways that we can improve technology, improve the auto sector, improve emissions? So that’s why we are in support of getting rid of the cap-and-trade: because it just doesn’t work. It does not work.

It’s not coming from us, Mr. Speaker; it’s coming from the Auditor General, it’s coming from independent studies and it’s coming from the Fraser Institute. We all know the numbers and figures presented by the Auditor General. This is going to cost Ontarians \$8 billion, and there’s no real evidence that it’s going to work.

So, really, we are about respecting taxpayer dollars. We are about making sure that the money that we receive from people is being spent wisely. That means coming up with a climate change plan that makes sense, a climate change plan that does not penalize rural communities, a climate change plan that does not penalize people who have no access to public transit, and a climate change plan that does not penalize our farmers, because the current system has had a huge negative impact on the 36,000 family farms in Ontario and on all of the ones in my riding.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, just last year, around March, I went to SunTech Greenhouse—SunTech tomatoes. It is a greenhouse located in my riding of Carleton, owned by Mr. Mitchell. This was a few months after the carbon tax and cap-and-trade had been implemented, so hydro had gone up, prices had gone up.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you would assume that a greenhouse that grows tomatoes, that is self-sufficient, that reuses 80% of the carbon dioxide that it creates back into the plants because plants need it and they produce oxygen, would have some kind of credit or some sort of recognition from the government, but he did not. Not only had his hydro prices gone up, but it had gotten to a point where he could not compete with Mexican imports of tomatoes.

At the end of the day, agricultural produce is a commodity. People aren’t going to buy something simply because it’s from Ontario. They’re going to look at the

prices at the grocery store, at the supermarket, and they’re going to go for the cheapest product, because Ontarians are already hurting. They’re already strapped for cash. When you’re on your last few dollars and cents, you don’t care where those tomatoes come from. You’re just going to get the cheapest.

There’s a bigger story behind that, because not only are locally grown agricultural products now more expensive because farmers have to offset the price of the carbon tax, they’re competing with the cheaper products that are being imported by transportation trucks from Mexico to Canada. If our carbon tax is actually supposed to reduce emissions and is supposed to do our environmental global duty, then why is it in fact having the effect of promoting carbon emissions from other countries?

Because when you see that those tomatoes are cheaper to sell here and yet there are emissions that are being emitted just through the production and through the transportation of those tomatoes here to Ontario, the cap-and-trade isn’t actually doing what it’s supposed to do. That’s not just with greenhouses. I see it across cash crops, wheat, produce—everything. With the trade war that’s going on, we need to do everything that we can to ensure that our agricultural sector and our commodity products are able to compete in a fair marketplace. A fair marketplace is one that does not unnecessarily impose unfair costs on our own domestic market such that they cannot even compete with foreign imports.

Cancelling the carbon tax was one of the promises that we made and one of the promises that we campaigned on. When I hear from members opposite stating: “Where is the consultation? Why aren’t you talking with the people?”, well, June 7 was the consultation. Everything that we did leading up to June 7 was the consultation. The people of Ontario elected us with the clear mandate to get rid of the carbon tax. It was one of our five priorities. It was right there. We consulted with every single Ontarian, and every single Ontarian that went to the ballot box that day was aware of what we were planning on doing.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Every Ontarian? It was 40% or 60%, not so much.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: The other side can yell and complain all they want, but at the end of the day, there was consultation, this was made very clear to the public and we had a very strong mandate from the people of Ontario to get rid of this carbon tax. Promises made, promises kept.

Getting rid of this carbon tax and cap-and-trade program is going to go a long way not only towards the agricultural sector, but also to reducing the everyday cost of living for families in Ontario. It’s one step towards lowering gasoline prices; it’s one step toward lowering hydro bills.

0930

Let us not forget that when the carbon tax—this cap-and-trade scheme—was implemented, the Liberals refused to put that additional cost on people’s hydro bills.

That additional cost was absorbed, so people did not actually see the amount that they were being forced to pay because of this carbon tax.

The reason I say “forced” is because people were being forced to pay more for the basic necessities of life. People in Carleton, people in the majority of Ontario, when the weather is 40 degrees below zero; need to heat their homes. They need to live. There were several seniors in my riding who had to choose between heating their home and eating. This became a mantra for us, not because it was just another talking point but because this was actually what I was hearing at the doors.

Why is it that a 90-year-old man who lives in a small home by himself near Burritts Rapids, just on the boundary between Ottawa and Kemptville—why was he paying \$300 a month for hydro bills? It blows my mind. An old man, 90 years old, lives by himself. He’s on a pension, a fixed income, and yet his cost of living is constantly going up, to the point where he could barely afford to make ends meet. That is shameful. That is shameful.

People who have lived here their entire lives—they’ve worked hard; they’ve paid their taxes. They’ve built a life, they’ve contributed, and now they just want to retire. They expect that when they retire, they can afford to stay in their own home for the rest of their lives, that they can afford to be there, to feed themselves, to heat their homes and to live in dignity. But they couldn’t because inflation, coupled with the cost of living, was jumping through the roof, and they were still on a fixed income.

All of that is to say that we’re proud, and I’m personally proud, that we are repealing the cap-and-trade carbon scheme here in Ontario, because it was not doing anything for Ontarians. It was not doing anything for the environment. It was supposed to be an initiative that would fund new programs, or whatever it was the Liberals wanted to do, but several news articles and even the Auditor General herself indicated that the money being collected was going to pre-existing projects. The Auditor General herself indicated that there was no concrete proof or evidence that this scheme the Liberals had come up with would actually reduce carbon emissions in Ontario by a significant amount. The burden being put on the Ontario taxpayer far outweighed any benefit or any advantage that this program would bring.

This isn’t something coming from us; this isn’t a partisan PC Party type of thing. There were organizations all across Ontario that were fed up with the carbon tax. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture was one. Another one was the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. I didn’t even know that association existed, but it does. I met with several of them and they indicated to me that, as small businesses, their members were struggling to operate and a lot of them had to close down.

In fact, one such convenience store did close down during my campaign in the past two years. It was a convenience store in a small little village, Kars, which is about half an hour south of Ottawa—still within the boundaries, but it was rural. That was the only place

people could go to get the local newspaper, to buy an ice cream—they couldn’t even fill up on gas because that had been closed down a while ago. But, you know, a small convenience store that had been there for 20 years—and this past year, he had to shut it down because he just could not afford to pay his bills anymore.

The carbon tax has done nothing but kill jobs, put businesses in a dire predicament where they can barely make ends meet—and people are having difficulty paying their bills.

With the last few minutes, I just want to sum up everything about this bill that we support and the reasons why we’re doing it. As I indicated a few days ago in my response to a member opposite, the carbon tax era is over. Eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax is going to save families \$260 per year; it’s a necessary step to reducing gas prices; and the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, introduced by the Honourable Rod Phillips, provides a reasonable and transparent plan to wind down the program in a way that minimizes the impact on taxpayer dollars while offering some support for eligible participants of Ontario’s cap-and-trade carbon tax program.

I have reviewed the legislation, and I am proud of it. It is well drafted, it is responsible, and it respects Ontarians.

If passed, this legislation is going to provide a framework for compensating the regulated community, it’s going to authorize the development of regulations in order to implement a compensation plan, and it’s going to require Ontario to develop a climate change plan and report back on its progress. That was one of our campaign promises: responsibility, accountability and trust.

With the wind-down of the cap-and-trade program, ministries are ending the climate change programs funded through cap-and-trade proceeds, including those programs that have not yet been implemented in 2018-19 that were to be funded by cap-and-trade proceeds, and winding down those programs implemented in 2017-18, including those delivered through transfer payment agreements. We’re also proposing changes to the existing greenhouse gas framework to provide businesses with certainty on what their reporting requirements are as part of the orderly wind-down of the cap-and-trade program.

At the end of the day, the carbon tax scheme did nothing but take hundreds of millions of dollars out of Ontario into other jurisdictions. We need to respect taxpayer money and we need to make sure that those dollars remain in Ontario while we find a responsible and economical way to conserve the environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I’m sorry that I only have two minutes to respond to this particular part of the debate on the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, Bill 4.

What we have in the province right now, as a result of the actions of this government, is a crisis in confidence. The member opposite talked about respecting taxpayers; well, taxpayers had contracts and companies and corpor-

ations had contracts with this government which this government has cancelled in bad faith. So you can't talk about respecting the citizens of this province on climate change, on global warming—and then, from a business perspective, if you actually don't have a plan, as you described it, no orderly wind-down of the cap-and-trade program. In fact, many corporations have just been caught off guard by this.

0940

The retroactive termination of crown liability to pay compensation for breach of contract: It is unprecedented that this is embedded in this piece of legislation. It is actually taking corporations that were required to purchase what are essentially legislatively created financial assets in good faith—and they entered into an arrangement with the province whereby they could purchase the assets in exchange for a right to emit greenhouse gases. So you have corporations that were compelled to be part of this act and then you actually had volunteers—universities, colleges, schools—that were part of this, that entered in good faith with the government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They are receiving no compensation whatsoever.

So how can you talk about respecting corporations and taxpayers and citizens when you are embedding the right to breach contracts with these corporations? It lends itself, quite honestly, to hypocrisy and compromises the confidence that corporations and businesses have in this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: It is my honour to rise today in support of Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act.

During my campaign, I spoke with thousands of residents of Mississauga Centre and the most common concern that I heard from people is that life was harder under the Liberals; that prices had gone significantly up, such as gasoline and hydro; that people had to choose between heating and eating; that thousands of manufacturing jobs had left Ontario.

In fact, the existing cap-and-trade carbon tax is one of the most crucial factors that is making everyday living less affordable for Ontarians. It is this very tax that makes heating homes more expensive during the winter months. It is this carbon tax that is significantly contributing to the high cost of gasoline at the pumps. And it is this tax that is driving manufacturing jobs out of Ontario.

It is estimated that with the cancellation of this tax, the average family will get to keep an additional \$260 a year in their pocket and at least 14,000 manufacturing jobs will be created. As was said in the throne speech, there is no tax dollar better spent than the one that is left of the pockets of the taxpayer.

Speaker, I would also like to emphasize that we live in a global economy, where day by day our goods and services compete both on the international and domestic markets. What the cap-and-trade carbon tax has done is weakened the ability of our Ontario goods to compete. As my colleague has mentioned, how is it possible that goods that are made here locally in Ontario cannot

compete with goods that are made in Mexico? That is simply not acceptable and shameful. Our government and our Premier have vowed to make Ontario open for business.

The cancellation of Wynne's cap-and-trade carbon tax and challenging Trudeau's—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to speak to the speaker from Carleton. I would like to just address some of the comments she had made earlier about the Niagara farmers and the agricultural lands within the Niagara area.

Being from St. Catharines, I grew up right beside Niagara-on-the-Lake, where we have the best vineyards in all of Canada, I believe, and all of Ontario, as well as the most precious fruit lands within the greenbelt. I speak on that because of climate change and what will happen with this Bill 4 cap-and-trade elimination.

We've had the hottest summer temperatures on record in Niagara. And some of the hottest summer temperatures that are on record, as well as some of the most smog advisories. We've had approximately three days of rain. This does not help our vineyards and our special fruits that we take pride in selling at this time of the year. I believe it's almost peach season and we're getting into September in another month where we're going to have the grape and wine festival.

I've spoken to thousands and hundreds of farmers within that area over the past summer. They have also said that the heat advisories, the hottest summer without rain has affected their vineyards as well as their precious fruits.

Interjection: Climate change is here.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Exactly. Climate change is here.

A plan? I haven't seen a plan. The only plan I've seen is a plan that is completely hurting the Niagara vineyards, the Niagara farmers. I would like to just say that climate change is here and it's not helping the farmers in Niagara.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Our government was elected on a simple promise: to be for the people. During our campaign and since my election as the MPP for Scarborough—Agincourt, one question kept coming up at almost every single door we knocked on: "How are you going to put people first and make life more affordable for my family?"

While we understand the challenges that climate change presents, a regressive tax is not the solution to those challenges. The people of Scarborough—Agincourt have made it clear to me that they do not want an unfair tax that puts the burdens on their families and small businesses. We ran on a platform to get rid of cap-and-trade, and the people of Scarborough—Agincourt decided to vote for no carbon tax. I am proud to tell my constituents that Ontario's carbon tax era is over. Promise made, promise kept.

I am proud to tell you that our plan to eliminate cap-and-trade means cheaper gas prices, lower energy bills and more money in the pockets of our families—saving families \$260 a year. But it doesn't stop there. Our plan also includes a commitment to put into place a more effective plan. We are committed to finding real solutions to the environmental challenges we face. The best part is that we will do it in a responsible way that is respectful of the taxpayers' money. This is our plan, a made-in-Ontario plan.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We now return to the member from Carleton to wrap up the debate.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: The members opposite are talking the current scheme as if there was a fully thought-out plan. But there was no plan.

In fact, the Auditor General herself said that the 2020 target is 15% below 1990 levels, and the cap-and-trade program will probably deliver less than one fifth of those required reductions. On top of that, over the next three years, as much as \$466 million would leave Ontario's economy, because it will be cheaper for businesses to buy allowances from Quebec and California than it will be to reduce emissions. The amount flowing out of the province could reach \$2.2 billion by 2030. If that's the plan that the Liberals had, that is not a good plan and it is not a plan that has Ontario's best interests at heart.

Our proposed legislation is taking a responsible and pragmatic approach. Our proposed legislation includes a commitment to put into place a more effective plan, a made-in-Ontario solution to address the environmental challenges that we face while respecting the taxpayers of this province, while respecting the businesses in this province, while respecting the farmers of this province and while respecting this province's environment—because at the end of the day, we are all in this together and we all want what is best for our families and our future.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader or a designate specifies otherwise.

I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I must say, you look awesome in that chair and you're going to do a great job.

I would like to share with you also that we would like this debate to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to have the opportunity to stand in this fine Legislature and speak on such an important topic, to talk about climate, to talk about our plans—or lack thereof, unfortunately—and to talk about our future. I think that any chance we have to speak

about health and wellness and a stronger, better future for everyone in Ontario, we should all embrace.

Here we are debating Bill 4, which is An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016. Speaker, I have a lot that I would like to get into, but I'm going to start—I'm going to take us back to not too long ago, to the campaign. It was very interesting, the provincial campaign leading up to this session. The now-government did a lot of campaigning about axing the carbon tax and getting rid of the carbon tax, which I thought was so interesting all the way along, because we never had a carbon tax.

We did not have a carbon tax in the province of Ontario. We had a cap-and-trade system, one that we criticized, and rightly so. That was the Liberal plan that could have been better, should have been better. We should still be having that conversation, quite frankly, if this were a responsible government. But it was a cap-and-trade system, not a carbon tax. However, the rhetoric was "carbon tax," so now we keep hearing the government members refer to it as the "cap-and-trade carbon tax." They've combined them into one concept. I will admit that they both start with "C," so that's a fair thing to do. So does "conflate," but anyway.

They campaigned on axing the carbon tax, but we all knew—or the people who were understanding the semantics; the words matter here—that if we were to get rid of the cap-and-trade system, the federal government was going to come in with their alternative, their federal levy that is indeed a carbon tax. The feds have told all of the provinces, "Thou shalt have a system for your carbon." Then, if we didn't have one that met the thresholds and met the criteria, the federal government was going to impose that carbon tax. We as a province came up with cap-and-trade.

It was just so interesting because, with the campaign and all of the language around axing this carbon tax, really what we've done is asked for a carbon tax. Now the indignation on that side, that "How dare the feds do this and now we're going to take them to court" and all of these things—the campaigning continues, and I look forward to when the governing will start—which is why we are here talking about this change and where we go from here. They have the majority, they have their—I was going to say "plan"—they have their ideas for going forward, but unfortunately, on this file, they are missing that plan.

Also, to take us back a little bit further in time—because there was a member opposite who made a comment earlier as we've been talking about climate change. We've been talking about the forest fires that we're seeing, we've been talking about the drier conditions, we've been talking about the unpredictable weather, we've been talking about the severity of storms.

Yesterday was an interesting day in Oshawa, and I'm sure it was across the province, where we had unbelievable thunderstorms. I had gotten up in the morning and watered my front grass at 6 or 7, and my back lawn.

Well, it's like when you wash your car, Speaker, and then it rains; I watered my lawns and then we had one heck of a thunderstorm—and then I was back out on the deck a few hours after that. Every day is a new climate adventure. We're very lucky that it isn't more dangerous where we live. I think, as we see climate continuing to change, we're going to see more severity. We should be having the conversation about our future.

As we're talking about all of these issues, the forest fires—the member, I think, from Markham–Stouffville had said that, for us to be using those fires as somehow justifying carbon pricing and whatnot, is just sad, and that we do need to do something about climate change and that that goes without saying. But it doesn't go without saying, because we don't have it in writing. We don't have a plan from this government.

The member took us back to reminding us that there have been initiatives that have worked in the past. But if we're going to talk about acid rain—I don't remember how old Jennifer K. French was back when we were fighting those fights, but I feel like it was elementary school—the climate has changed and our world has changed so much since that time that acid rain could be around the next corner as we continue to make poor decisions and as we're not having strategies in place, whether it's to tax or whether it's to have—what's the word I want? I can't think of the word. If you're going to pollute, that there's going to be some consequence—I'm looking for the word “consequence”—that we do need consequences that are going to be deterrents. We need something that is going to make our world cleaner and better.

Back to this bill: This bill doesn't make concrete commitments to lowering greenhouse gas emissions, which is unfortunate. It is a bill that cancels cap-and-trade, which is going to make a significant difference financially for the richest of us but not for the everyday families. Rich families will see an average annual benefit from cancelling cap-and-trade that is about four times greater than families that make less than \$40,000. Again, the member opposite—a different member opposite—said that we're all in this together. Well, we are, but the benefits are not going to be shared equally, which isn't surprising anyone these days.

We've also talked about taxpayers—“taxpayers, taxpayers, taxpayers”—and I'm awfully glad, but let's talk about who taxpayers are. The member from Waterloo reminded us that taxpayers are businesses, taxpayers are families, and taxpayers are parents of children who are in crumbling schools that are not slated to get repairs, because the money that came from the cap-and-trade coffers that was going to go into repairs is not going to come from that anymore. Well, then, is it coming from somewhere else? Are you going to put it in the budget? Are we going to have that change? We don't know. We don't know. We can guess, I guess. But taxpayers are real people. Taxpayers are the folks who are concerned that the cycling programs across our communities are no longer going to be funded through the GreenON money. Okay: Is there going to be another place that that money

comes from, or is it just up to the municipalities? The downloading and everything has already been such a struggle for them, so any other community program, they just—there's no money for that, and this government is okay with that. The taxpayers who were looking forward to safer, better and greener cycling infrastructure in their communities: “Oh, well.” Those taxpayers don't matter? To say “taxpayers” as though it isn't a human face, a family face, a business face, I think, is missing the whole point. Don't forget, it's not about the rhetoric; it's about the important work. That's why we're here.

We've already been talking about the cancellation of contracts and this government leaving itself protected from backlash and from the legal ramifications of cancelling contracts. We're finding more and more that the business community is getting more and more concerned about that. Why would anyone want to do business in the province of Ontario? If you're going to say that Ontario is open for business—I've said this before: If that kind of business is leaving the businesses open to financial distress because this government can't follow through on a contract, well, that's problematic. We have another example of that here, frankly.

1000

The act retroactively terminates crown liability to pay compensation for breach of contract. This is unusual. It basically means the government is giving themselves the right to expropriate private property without compensation. Now, using this power undermines confidence in doing business with the government. This is Bill 4. We just got here and this is not the first bill that is doing this; I think it was Bill 2. It seems to be par for the course now: “Make sure that no business can come back and get us when we disallow their contracts, when we go in and wreck stuff.”

There is so much that's unclear about this bill. We don't know whether Ontario is opening itself up to challenges by Quebec and California. We have no idea. Universities and hospitals were also participants in the cap-and-trade program, but we don't know how this is going to affect them.

Interestingly, there were some folks that had to—the large polluters had to be part of this cap-and-trade program; no surprise there. There is a compensation scheme allowed for in here, but with more questions than answers.

Then you have other folks. There are 21 market participants. Market participants are companies or groups that opted into this program, that decided to be a part of it for various reasons. There's no compensation for them. They're being penalized for participating voluntarily. I'm just going to let that sink in. Imagine that you have an environmental responsibility program. The polluters have to be a part of it, but you can be a part of it too if you want to be environmentally responsible and be part of a cleaner, greener, brighter, better future. I'm oversimplifying here; I don't know what their motivation was for participating. But no compensation for you. “Oh, well. Sorry. You don't get any money back. You

shouldn't have volunteered to be a part of a cleaner, greener initiative. No compensation for you." So no good deed goes unpunished is another piece to that.

I'm going to read something here from an article, "Ontario Cap-and-Trade Repeal Bill Sees Compliance Obligations, Few Refunds for Purchase Allowances," from July 25:

"It is outrageous not to compensate the market participants"—side note, that's who I was just talking about, the market participants that chose to participate that didn't have to—"while also limiting the government's civil liability. How can this government be credible when it is acting like a thug? Why would anybody want to do business in Ontario?" another observer said.

"It doesn't sound like [the government] knows what they're doing or have thought about implications of their actions. Completely irresponsible ... What will it do with the money collected and not reimbursed rightly to those who bought those allowances in good faith. That is theft!"

If this is the language being used in conversations in business circles, I think this government is in trouble. If it isn't doing its homework and its math on these programs, it probably should. I don't know where the impetus is coming up from, I don't know if it's from the Premier's office, but I would take the time. If you're going to bring forward a bill like this that says, "We're doing away with this system, we haven't thought it through, we don't have a replacement, na-na-na-na-na," that's the wrong thing to do because now you're creating problems in the business world and that, I thought, was supposed to be your base. If the business community is calling you thugs and not trusting you, I would suggest that you have a sit-down with them, put their minds at ease and, better yet, come up with a plan.

I have already talked about penalizing the market participants; here is another part that said, "The government is effectively saying these 20 or so voluntary market participants shouldn't have been participating. It's kind of crazy and it sets a really bad precedent for a ruling government in a first world country..."

"In addition, the bill carries a clause to protect the government from any legal liability, which is certain to further infuriate some scheme participants, including those who feel they are owed their money back."

You've got a lot of people who are going to be unhappy. They're taxpayers, by the way. When you're talking about the taxpayer, let's not forget that those are some of your businesses as well.

We've talked about the fact that there is no clear plan and that's disappointing. There are a lot of powers given to the minister to make determinations, to set targets, but we don't know when. We have no idea what those targets are. But here is a basic thing in life: I have taught grades 7 and 8, I've taught elementary school, but when you talk about goal-setting or setting targets, you're supposed to actually have something you're aiming for. Even if it's a bite-sized goal, it's something that you are aiming towards. Otherwise, how on earth will you know when

you've hit it? If you set a goal, you know when you've fallen short, you know when you've hit it. You can always make it a better goal and make it a bigger goal. But when you don't have a goal at all, you can spend all day patting yourself on the back: "Hey, look. We just did something good." We have no idea how to measure that and it's certainly not what it could have been or should have been.

Again, disappointing: This government needs to start to govern. We're past the campaign now. As I said, you wanted to axe the carbon tax, but where are we? Where is this plan? Where is Ontario's faith in you? We see a climate crisis everywhere we look around the province. We see it everywhere we look around the globe. But the member from Waterloo said that we also have a crisis of confidence. It is taxpayers who are going to be having that crisis of confidence; it is just everyday Ontarians, businesses. I would sit down and do the careful math on this if I were this government.

Let's not forget, though, when it does come to climate, that this is a government that I think, right out the gate, fired our chief scientist. Does anyone know? Have we recast that role? So to come in and say, "Science? Ha. Away with you," doesn't help us have any faith when I see this bill in front of us that says, "Cap-and-trade or cap-and-trade carbon tax," or whatever combined name you're giving it, "away with you." What is the replacement?

No minimums; there are no targets: "Just trust us." Guys, if you're already pulling the "just trust us" and we're in an emergency summer session—we haven't even come back in our full capacity, running on all cylinders, and you're already doing the "just trust us" now—it's going to be a long four years if you guys don't start communicating with your people who you say you represent, which is all the people, apparently, except for business or taxpayers or families.

I'm not going to get into the weeds on the insufficient compensation framework. Suffice it to say, they're still deciding; they're determining. You've given the minister powers on how folks are going to be compensated—a lot of questions, more questions than answers. I'm worried that's going to be the theme for the next four years.

I would like to talk a little bit, though, about some local perspective. This is an article that had to do with regional governments, but there's a part in here—our regional chair, Gerri Lynn O'Connor, is quoted in this local article:

"The new provincial government has cancelled funding for various programs that were targeted to improve the energy efficiency of social housing stock, to expand transit and to make our infrastructure more resilient to climate change," O'Connor said. "Yet we have no indication of how, or if, the Premier plans to replace this funding to municipalities generated by the cap-and-trade program."

"The veteran regional councillor called on the Conservative government to soundly plan for the future."

"I was a member of regional council the last time the province enacted change of this magnitude. I urge the

provincial government to undertake the kind of consultation that is necessary on this important issue.”

I second that. I hope they start to do the consultation that they say is so important when it comes to some topics and yet others: “Shh. No consultation.”

When it comes to the cancellation of \$100 million in school repair funds, fortunately my board, the Durham District School Board, had already spent \$5.2 million of the \$7.5 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund that had been earmarked for things like boilers, heating controllers, air conditioning and replacements, that sort of thing. They had already used a significant chunk of the money; they had already put in and spent that money. So that’s a positive. But now, “Board staff is now trying to determine how much of the remaining \$2.3 million will be honoured.

“At this point in time, it would be difficult to determine the exact effect of this cancellation of funding.... What we’re doing right now, is reviewing the criteria for the cut-off provided by the ministry, versus the contracts which we’ve already engaged in.”

Interestingly, the Durham Catholic District School Board was allotted \$467,270 under the fund, but unfortunately none of it has been spent so far, which means none of it is available. So they are still going to have to make those improvements to the schools, but they’re going to have to do it over a longer period of time. That money is just gone—actually, that money is not gone; it’s still sitting in a fund that can be used at the minister’s discretion, so that’s one thing.

Well, Speaker, I thought that 20 minutes was going to be hard to fill. I have two seconds left. I look forward to my two-minute wrap-up.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Unfortunately, that two-minute wrap-up will have to wait until we do questions and comments at the next time this bill is up.

Seeing the time on the clock, this House is in recess until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1011 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: On Thursday, July 25, barbaric ISIS murderers slaughtered more than 200 innocent Syrian Druze civilians in the government-held city of Sweida in southern Syria.

Today, it’s my honour to welcome this morning several proud and resilient members of the Canadian Druze community: Mr. Walid El Awar, honorary president of the Canadian Druze Society; Dr. Bashir Hosn, representative of the social affairs committee; Adnan Hatoum, representative of the Sweida Druze community; Ms. Salma Hatoum, youth director; Khaled Chalhoub; Hashim Alsaadi; Kamil Rafeeh; Sami Rafeeh; Raian Rafeeh; Ghazal Rafeeh; Esmael Abofakher; Iyad Kattini; Ziad Adwan; Souhad Al Faqih; Raghdad Adwan; Bassem Kattini; Mahfouz Kattini; Ahsan Farhat; Anas

Arabi; Mary Hatoum; Nagham Adwan; Giath Hamdan; Feras Alhusein; and Talal El Atrache.

Thank you all for your presence here this morning. We grieve with you, and we are standing in solidarity with your community.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: It gives me great honour to introduce my chief youth organizer in the riding of Pickering–Uxbridge: from Uxbridge, Dominic Morrissey’s son, Noah Morrissey.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I would like to welcome my close friend and someone who was instrumental in the success of my campaign, Girishanth. Also, I would like to extend a warm welcome to his cousin, Subicsha Thayaparan, who came all the way from London, England. She is very young and very interested in politics. Today is a good opportunity for her to see how we do it on the other side of the pond.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome my constituent and friend Donna Lajeunesse to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I’d like to introduce and welcome Margaret Schleier Stahl to the Legislature, a great friend of the Liberal family from Chatham–Kent–Leamington. Welcome, Margaret.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I wanted to introduce my intern, Daria Tsymbalarou. She is 18 and just graduated from high school. She is starting at Western University in the fall, and she is here to learn about politics.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It’s actually not an introduction; it is a birthday greeting on behalf of this entire assembly to page Annabelle. Happy birthday, Annabelle.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I’d like to introduce my very good friend and very successful realtor in Brampton, Kamal Sandhu, and his uncles from India: Mahil Singh Sandhu, Balwinder Singh Sidhu and Mohinder Singh Sanghera. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My former page, my first page, Evan Tanovich, is here this morning. Welcome back to Queen’s Park, Evan. His younger brother Nicholas Tanovich is here as well. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Sarnia–Lambton? Sarnia–Lambton?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn’t hear you.

I’d like to introduce the father of our page, Annabelle. Eric Rayson is in the east members’ gallery. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Mike Harris: I’d like to introduce my executive assistant, Dr. Matthew Stubbings, who is here visiting from our constituency office today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Every day more and more people are speaking out against the Premier’s backroom deal with social

conservatives to repeal the updated sexual health curriculum. School boards, parents, educators and now health professionals are all speaking out against the Premier's plan to put the health and safety of students at risk.

Why is the Deputy Premier ignoring the vast majority of Ontarians and going along with the Premier's plan to scrub same-sex families, gender identity and consent out of Ontario's classrooms?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the leader of the official opposition for the question.

What we have said from the beginning, what we said during the course of the campaign is that we want to involve parents in the consultations with respect to the sex and health ed curriculum that's going to be taught in the schools. Parents were not consulted properly in the last iteration. We want to make sure that we have a thorough consultation. We want to hear from anybody who has something to say about the sex ed curriculum, so that we can make sure that it's updated, that it is current, that it covers all issues including cyberbullying, sexting, all of the other issues we want to have covered, to make sure that our students are going to be safe in our schools.

We're starting that consultation process in September and we want anybody who has something to say to be in touch with us and let us know what that is.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This morning, I welcomed Dr. Andrea Chittle to Queen's Park. She's a family physician from Guelph. Dr. Chittle joined me to announce that at least 19 health care organizations and nearly 1,800 doctors, nurses and health care professionals have signed a petition calling on the Premier to restore the updated health curriculum in its entirety. These medical professionals say that any repeal or dismantling of the curriculum is an affront to the rights and to the health of Ontario's youth.

Will the Deputy Premier stop listening to radical social conservatives and start listening to the Ontario doctors, nurses and health care professionals who are so very, very worried about our youth?

I'm going to send this to her with a page.

Hon. Christine Elliott: What I would say to the leader of the official opposition is this: We want to hear from everyone. We welcome Dr. Chittle's comments. We welcome the comments from the other health care professionals you're referring to, but we also want to hear from parents, because parents know what's best for their children, parents know at what age it's best for children to learn about certain things.

We want to make sure that we get it right, that we make sure that all of our students are protected and that they hear the things that they need to when it's most appropriate for them. So we welcome hearing from the health care professionals, but we also want to hear from parents.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Almost 1,800 doctors, nurses and health care professionals are calling on the Premier to stop putting the health and safety of students at risk. That should be the primary job of government, not putting our children at risk. That's 1,800 professionals who have devoted their careers to keeping people safe, and now are speaking out against this Premier because he is putting students at risk. When will the Deputy Premier find the courage to stand with these 1,800 medical professionals and speak out against the Premier's plan to put students in harm's way?

1040

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, nothing is more important to all of us in this legislative chamber than the health and safety of Ontario's children. That is why we want to have a thorough consultation process, to make sure that all of them are protected and that we'll teach them what they need to be taught, so that they can be successful in today's society.

But I think we also have to remember, because we've been focused on the sex ed curriculum in this place for—what, a month now? There are other aspects of our children's education that are also important, for example their math scores. We are falling behind the rest of Canada with respect to our math scores. We need to do better than that. We need to talk about that, and I would invite the leader of the official opposition to start focusing on that too, because that is also important to the future prosperity and well-being of our children.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Deputy Premier, whose words ring pretty hollow. The Premier's decision to side with radical social conservatives and rip up the health curriculum puts students at risk. That is the truth, Speaker. Whether they like it or not, that is the truth.

That's according to 1,800 doctors, nurses and health care professionals, as well as scores of parents, as well as scores of hundreds of thousands of other people who are very, very concerned about this. It is according to the RNAO, Planned Parenthood, Ontario's midwives and social workers, the Alliance for Healthy Communities, Canadian Women in Medicine, the Ontario Medical Students Association—and the list goes on and on and on. Why is the Deputy Premier ignoring health care leaders who are united in saying that the Premier's plan puts the health of our children at risk? That's what the Premier's plan does.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Speaker, through you to the leader of the official opposition: Of course we respect the views of health care professionals. Of course we're going to listen to what they have to say, but they are not the only ones who have an opinion on this.

Parents have an opinion. Parents know their children. Parents know when their children are able to hear about certain things. Are we going to pretend that we're not going to teach them that? Of course we're going to teach

them that, but we need to know when is best, and parents are the best judges of that for their own children. Their voices have not been heard.

There are only 1,600 responses that were received for the last iteration of the physical and sex ed curriculum. That is not a representative sample of parents across this province. We want to hear from all parents who want to express their views.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when is it best for kids to know about cyberbullying and sexting? When is it best for them to know about the dangers of sex and the disease that they can get? Right now is when it's best, Speaker. Right now: That's when it's best.

Students, parents, doctors and nurses aren't the only ones who are standing up to this Premier. At least 25 school boards are speaking out against this Premier's plan to remove any mention of same-sex families, consent, gender identity and cyberbullying from the curriculum. Those 25 school boards are worried that the Premier's plan contravenes human rights legislation in our country, and they have no idea how they're supposed to teach students the outdated 1998 curriculum in just four weeks' time.

Why does this Deputy Premier think school boards should roll back the clock to 1998 and deny students the crucial information they need to stay safe in 2018?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, through you: The leader of the official opposition is presupposing what's going to be in the updated curriculum. We're not doing that. What we are saying is that we want to hear from parents. We want to hear from medical specialists. We want to hear from anybody who has something to say on this issue about what should be included in the curriculum. We want it to be thorough. We want to have a full consultation. We want to make sure that it's going to cover all aspects of things that young people need to learn in order to be safe in our society.

But we also want to make sure they're going to be able to be successful, too, so I think we need to concentrate on a few other things as well: making sure that our students do well at school, getting up their math scores in particular, so they can be competitive with the rest of the world. We need to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The government is presupposing that kids are going to be safe without the information, tools—and tools that they need to be safe. That's the problem here. This—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize. The government side has to come to order. I have to be able to hear the leader of the official opposition, just as I have to hear the Deputy Premier. The government side has to come to order.

I apologize; I will give you extra time.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Deputy Premier is aiding and abetting the Premier's dangerous plan, Speaker,

instead of doing her job as the health minister and standing up to him.

Recently, she said that when a student asks questions that aren't in the new curriculum, those conversations should not happen in a classroom. She said they should happen in private, behind closed doors. You'd think this Deputy Premier would want to install closets in every classroom to have these discussions.

Educators have said this is "unbelievable" advice, and the head of the TDSB said it makes her "cringe." How can this Deputy Premier honestly suggest that same-sex families, gender identity and consent are dirty little secrets that should be sent back into the closet?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think it really is important to those Ontarians who may be watching these proceedings to correct what I actually did say in that situation. What I actually did say when I was asked whether it's all right for students to ask their teachers questions if they have questions—I think every teacher in Ontario would say yes to that, because I know that happens every single day.

If a student has a question and they don't have anyone else to ask—and that happens very often—is there anything wrong with them asking a teacher about that so the teacher can help them get the help they need? No, there is not. I think it's absolutely fine for a student to ask a teacher a question. There's nothing wrong with that.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Deputy Premier. Transit should be a fast and affordable service for everyone in the GTA. It should cost just \$3 to take GO Transit and the UP Express anywhere in this city. But the Premier disagrees.

This weekend, it was revealed that the Premier is refusing to lower the cost of GO trips in Toronto, forcing people to pay more for transit, pushing ridership even lower and throwing Toronto's transit planning into question.

Why does the Premier want commuters to pay more for transit in Toronto when life is already very unaffordable?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for the question. We are absolutely committed to making transit more affordable here in the city of Toronto and the greater GTA, but we're also in the midst of a thorough review of the state of Ontario's finances that has been brought on by the mismanagement of the previous regime.

The former Premier of British Columbia, the Honourable Gordon Campbell, is heading up our analysis that we will report by the end of this month. At that time, when we have a better view and a better idea, we will be responding to this in a more complete way.

I also want to point out—and I will deal with it perhaps more in the supplementary—that this is an ongoing discussion between Metrolinx and the city of

Toronto as well. I want to make it clear that at no time did Premier Ford in the campaign commit to this price. But we are absolutely committed to the improvement of transit and making transit, as well as life in general, more affordable for the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock again. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Everyone in the GTA should be able to commute anywhere in Toronto for just \$3 with GO Transit and the UP Express. Fast, convenient and affordable transit is the best way—the best way—to deal with the gridlock problems that we have, to help grow our economy and to help families spend more time together, but the Premier himself has refused to back \$3 GO Transit.

1050

After weeks of accusing city hall of inaction on transit and gridlock, when will this government admit that it's actually the Premier himself who is standing in the way of fast and affordable transit for Toronto commuters?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you again to the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Everybody would love everything to be free in this world. The reality is, nothing is.

Let's put it into perspective. We have a debt in this province of some \$320 billion. We have deficits that the previous government underestimated. The Auditor General said that they've underestimated them by \$6 billion. The Financial Accountability Officer has said at least that much.

We have some real challenges ahead of us. What we are going to determine with our full financial analysis, looking back at all spending and all costs that have been incurred under the previous government—we have Gordon Campbell heading up a panel to determine the current state of Ontario's finances. It would be irresponsible for us as a government to commit to something that we can't afford. That was the style of the old government. We want to make transit and life more affordable, and under Doug Ford, it will be.

BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SALES

Mrs. Amy Fee: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Today at Barley Days Brewery in Picton in Prince Edward county, Premier Ford formally announced that buck a beer is returning to Ontario. It's another promise made, promise kept.

This is something that many beer consumers have been wanting for a decade, when the previous government raised the minimum floor price for beer in Ontario.

Deputy Premier, can you explain to the Legislature the details of just how our government is returning to buck a beer in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to thank the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler for the question.

We were elected on a promise to reduce red tape and to put the people first. That includes the promise we

made to bring buck a beer back to Ontario. It simply is, as the member put it, a promise made and a promise kept.

Thanks to the previous Liberal government, the minimum price floor for beer was \$1.25. But effective August 27, our government for the people will lower the minimum price floor to \$1 for any beer with an alcohol volume of less than 5.6%. We're going to do this smartly and responsibly. Unlike the official opposition and the previous Liberal government, we trust Ontario beer drinkers and other consumers to make their own smart, mature and responsible choices.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you, Deputy Premier. Clearly, the days of the government putting its hands in the pockets of Ontarians each time they buy a two-four or a six-pack are over.

It is my understanding that Premier Ford has initiated the Premier's challenge to brewers across Ontario. There has been a lot of public interest in this government commitment, and the Premier's challenge provides a great opportunity for brewers, including non-financial promotional incentives. Can the Deputy Premier please explain how this is just the first step when it comes to fulfilling our government's plan to modernize alcohol retailing in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you again for the question. Mr. Speaker, we're bringing back this minimum price floor to encourage competition in the beer market and to save people money. By lowering the minimum retail price for beer, the government has opened up opportunities for brewers in the value-priced beer category. Today it was revealed that the LCBO is interested in discussing promotional considerations with any brewer that agrees to lower their prices on or after August 27.

Buck a beer is part of the government's commitment to transforming alcohol retailing in Ontario, which includes expanding the sale of beer and wine to convenience stores, grocery stores and big box stores. This is just further evidence that our government is going to do what we said we would do, and that's put Ontario consumers first.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This government's reckless decision to slash Toronto city council has left the rest of Ontario's municipalities wondering if they will be next.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister support reducing Ottawa city council from 23 to just six councillors?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the member: Bill 5, the Better Local Government Act, is a very clear bill. It only affects one municipality in the province of Ontario in terms of the composition of council, and it only deals with four regions when it

comes to pressing the pause button on changes that were proposed by the previous government. We've been very clear in terms of the city of Toronto. The fact that Bill 5 reduces the size of that council provides a more streamlined council.

With all due respect, the honourable member is fear-mongering and knows that this is only dealing with that council.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I'm just following the logic of the argument made by the minister. This government's entire justification for their undemocratic move is to align municipal wards with federal and provincial boundaries. So far, only Toronto has been targeted by this unconstitutional policy. But where does it end?

Mr. Speaker, will this government begin slashing city councils province-wide, reducing council in places like Sudbury or Windsor from 10 to 12 councillors to just two or three?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, through you to the member for Toronto-Danforth: I've been very clear. In a couple of weeks, we have the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference. One of the first decisions that I made as minister was to extend the opportunity for municipalities to ask for meetings with both myself and members of our cabinet. I know that that decision resulted in the number of meetings my ministry had—they went up from 49 to 77. We made it very clear to municipalities—

Interjection.

Hon. Steve Clark: Do you know what? The opposition can heckle all they want, but I look forward to engaging Ontario's municipalities. I look forward to hearing their suggestions on providing more efficient and more effective government. I invite them to come to AMO as well. It's an opportunity for us to hear very clearly what the municipal sector has to say.

Please stop the fearmongering, and let's talk about Bill 5.

REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, with responsibility for immigration.

Minister, the crisis at the border seems to be ongoing, with illegal border crossers making their way to Ontario and siphoning immigration and refugee border services away from family reunification and international student processing.

My question today on this important immigration matter is in relation to the federal government's response to your reasonable and straightforward request for reimbursement for our support for illegal crossers. I recall that all Premiers recently agreed that the federal government should be responsible and cover costs associated with their decision to encourage and support the illegal

crossing of the border as a means to access our immigration system.

I'm interested to know if the minister has received any response to her letter and formal request for reimbursement.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I would be remiss not to say how proud we are on this side of the House to have the member from Brampton West elected here as the first international student ever to be elected in this House. Congratulations.

A few weeks ago, I provided an itemized list of costs that have run up as a result of this irregular issue that's happening at the border in Quebec. Right now, we have about \$200 million and counting on itemized costs. That includes \$90 million in social assistance, \$74 million in shelter costs—\$12 million in shelter costs for Ottawa—\$3 million for the Red Cross and \$20 million as a result of education.

That \$200 million, we have asked the federal government to pay. They have come back to us with no letter, no offer, with only \$11 million—a drop in the bucket. So I hope, with the new appointment of Bill Blair as a cabinet minister responsible for the border crossings, that he will come to the table and ensure that we have that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Back to the minister: Minister, it is quite disappointing that there has been no response, not even an acknowledgement. I recall that you testified at a federal government hearing on the impact of crossers. I recall that your testimony to that committee focused on the financial and community impact illegal crossers are having in Ontario.

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Minister, the impact of illegal crossers is being felt in our education system, our legal aid system, our social assistance system and in our emergency shelter system. Is the federal government ignoring your testimony and letter? I know from your answer that the cost to our education system is \$20 million, the cost to our social assistance system is more than \$90 million and the cost to our emergency shelter system is \$85 million. Did I see the new federal minister deliver a cheque for only \$11 million to the city of Toronto against their emergency shelter cost?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: This is an issue that has captivated the country. All 13 Premiers of this country signed on with our plan to make sure that the federal government would support us, including Liberal and NDP Premiers. Over 67% of Canadians agree with the approach this government has taken in asking the federal government to pay the bills for its failed policies at the border.

We are asking for \$200 million; the federal government will give interviews and say that we should take it from the social transfers they send us. I have to ask the federal Liberals: What schools do they want us to close, what hospitals do they want us to close and what services do they not want us to deliver because they won't pay their bills?

CURRICULUM

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier.

This government's dangerous decision to drag Ontario backwards to 1998 has mobilized thousands of parents, students, educators, violence-against-women experts and health care professionals who are calling to keep the 2015 curriculum in place.

Some 26 school boards, representing more than 60% of Ontario students, have issued formal statements raising concerns about the harm this change will cause. Some school boards and thousands of teachers have said that they will continue to teach the 2015 curriculum because of their professional obligation to protect the health and well-being of students.

What legal consequences will these school boards and teachers face for refusing to follow ministry direction and doing the right thing for students?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the question, Speaker. Through you, back to the member opposite: We have said all along that we have every confidence in our teachers throughout this province of Ontario, and they're going to do right by our students.

When we talk about doing right by our students, it also means respecting their parents. We made a campaign promise that we're going to keep. We are going to respect parents and conduct a very comprehensive consultation that I think everybody in this House will be supportive of. I invite them to join me this fall when we kick off the consultation, because we must respect parents. We must provide a forum for all people to contribute their voice.

Do you know what, Speaker? The interesting part about all of this—when I say it's comprehensive, we're also going to be taking a look at getting back to the basics. We're going to be addressing math as well. You just wait.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has warned that repealing the 2015 curriculum violates Education Act requirements for school boards to "promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all" students, and also violates the charter rights of LGBTQ students and families.

Not only is this government putting the health and safety of Ontario students at risk, but it is also creating legal jeopardy for school boards and teachers. Will this government act now to end the chaos and direct school boards to continue using the 2015 curriculum when students return to school in September?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I feel it's important that we remind the opposition party that their former deputy leader and the current federal leader of the NDP said, "The lack of inclusive consultation before announcing the curriculum was disrespectful to parents." He went on

to say, "I urge the government to sit down with parents and allow an open dialogue before implementing changes."

Speaker, I am so pleased to share with you that we are going to be working with our parents; we're going to be keeping our promise to respect them. We are going to be moving forward, and Ontario can trust us when we say we're going to be addressing what needs to be fixed in the education system. We're going to be consulting parents in terms of moving forward with our health and physical education curriculum. We're also going to be talking to our parents about what else needs to be addressed and—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Next question. Start the clock.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est pour la vice-première ministre. Last week, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services cancelled the Basic Income Pilot project before the line-by-line audit. She explained her decision in the following terms: The basic income project is a "disincentive" for people to find work. "When you're encouraging people to accept money without strings attached it really doesn't send a message that our ministry and our government wants to send."

Is it the position of the Progressive Conservative government that people who are in receipt of social assistance and who are participating in the Basic Income Pilot are lazy?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Community Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much for the question. I reject the premise of it. We haven't cancelled anything yet; we announced that we would be winding it down. We said that we would come forward with a plan in 100 days—94 now—and that during that period of time we would have a 1.5% increase to social assistance rates.

Let me be perfectly clear: We want to help people be successful in this province, and we need to do so with equal measures of head and heart. Compassion can't simply be measured by dollars and cents. We believe, on this side of the House, that social assistance should be about lifting people up and helping people get their lives back on track. Just giving money away is false hope.

To begin, the basic income is a complicated research project that was failing, plain and simple. The Liberal government had difficulty signing people up, and now a sizable number of those people, over 25% of them, either dropped out or are failing to meet their obligations—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: The announcement from the minister was a shock to the participants and to

Ontarians, including the former senator and former chief of staff to Ontario PC Premier Bill Davis, Hugh Segal, who said that he had assurances from the Ford campaign that the pilot would be maintained so that Ontario would see the results in terms of health, education and justice outcomes and the potential savings from various public expenditures.

We're all worried about the orders that the minister has received. I know she's committed to doing the right thing for the less fortunate, but why is it that we don't know what's in stock? My question is, can the Deputy Premier commit today to releasing all the mandate letters of the ministers so that Ontarians know what exactly is in stock, particularly the mandate letter for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the member's question. Look, given the fact that the Liberal government had difficulties signing people up to this program and that over 25% are either failing to comply or have dropped out, it calls into question whether the research is valid. I have great respect for Senator Segal, as do many people in this caucus. But I have to tell you, when we were left a set of books, the tough choices had to be made. This research project was going to cost \$150 million. Where I come from, that's a lot of money for research that might not be valid. When I look at the program the previous government wanted to bring forward, it was a \$17-billion program on top of a \$10-billion social assistance project.

I ask the member opposite, does she think Ontario's most vulnerable people should see an increase in the HST by 7%? That's what this government would have done—the previous government. They made terrible decisions that hurt the most vulnerable. But I can assure you, I will never walk away from our most vulnerable—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock.

Next question.

1110

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Billy Pang: My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Last month, Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada published a report that indicated violent crime in Ontario has been seeing an increase of 7.1% since 2016. This report confirmed what we already knew: that gun-and-gang-related violence has increased in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, with the recent brazen and indiscriminate acts of gun violence being seen in our streets, our government for the people has remained committed to public safety and keeping all Ontarians safe. Could the minister please update the members of this Legislature on how this ministry will tackle gun violence in this province?

Hon. Michael Tibollo: Thank you to the member from Markham–Unionville for the question. Public safety, as we've always said, is a paramount concern to this government. With the rise in gun and gang violence on our streets, it's clear that the current strategies no longer support our incredible police services in battling these criminal acts. Ontario's police services are among the very best in the world and our government will remain committed to providing the brave men and women of these forces with the tools and resources required to do their jobs safely.

At my ministry, Mr. Speaker, ensuring public safety throughout this great province is our number one priority. Our government will continue to remain focused on our commitment to tackling gang and gun violence in Ontario, especially violence within the city of Toronto. The status quo is failing, and we are the only party in this House prepared to do the work that needs to be done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Billy Pang: Back to the minister: I want to thank the minister for his response. I'm proud to stand here today knowing that our government is committed to tackling gun and gang violence in this province, and providing the men and women of Ontario police services with the tools and resources they so desperately need. Mr. Speaker, policing is a dangerous job, and the men and women of our police services need to understand that our government for the people is here to listen to them, and that we remain committed to ensuring public safety across the province.

To the minister: What action will you take to support our front-line officers in tackling gun violence?

Hon. Michael Tibollo: Once again, thank you for that question. I'd like to again state that this government will continue to meet with our community safety partners over the coming weeks so that we can find solutions necessary to protect Ontarians from being the victims of senseless violence and to keep our first responders safe while performing their duties.

Mr. Speaker, my ministry will be continuing our important work on examining current community safety initiatives and their effectiveness in protecting the people within this great province, as well as our many dedicated first responders. During the election campaign, we made a promise to all Ontarians that we will commit to providing our front-line officers with the tools and resources they need to keep our communities safe. Promises made, promises kept.

FIREFIGHTING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Northern Ontario is going through one of the worst fire seasons in recent memory. Some of those fires have been categorized by the MNR as being out of control for weeks. Evacuations and evacuation alerts have been issued in many areas. Northerners are

very appreciative of the resources that the province and other jurisdictions have put forward to fight these fires.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister assure northerners that all available resources will be requested and that these resources will be focused on the fires until they are brought under control?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I thank the member very much for his question. It's true that, due to ongoing dry temperatures and dry conditions and thunderstorms and wind, we have a record amount of fires throughout Ontario this season. My ministry has been on top of this since day one, putting the necessary resources where they are needed, when they are needed.

There are three types of responses to fires. There's a full response, which is an initial attack and sustained action until the fire is out. There is a modified response, which is a combination of suppression strategies and monitoring sections within the natural resources. And there's a monitored response, to assess and determine any additional responses needed.

My ministry is on top of these, working day in and day out. We have called out to other jurisdictions across the province, across the country and across the United States and Mexico to work together to bring these fires under control. We will continue to support our front-line fire crews fighting these fires day in and day out until they are out, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock.

Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: Northerners are very appreciative of the heroic efforts of the fire rangers, water bomber crews and everyone else who is involved in fighting this fire. In one case, a firefighter sacrificed his life, and our condolences go out to the Gadwa family.

Many volunteers and community groups have also stepped up to the plate. For some, like tourist camp operators, forestry contractors and one farmer I know who might have to evacuate his dairy herd because of the evacuation notice, their economic survival might be at stake because of this. Can the minister assure them that the province will institute emergency measures to help them survive this economic disaster?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks to the member for that supplemental. We have ongoing right now one of the greatest coordinated events in northern Ontario history, working with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, local OPP and local municipalities and communities to ensure that the safety of the public comes first, followed by the safety of the properties, to ensure that we can protect businesses, we can protect cottages, we can protect private property and public property from the damages of fire. We are succeeding in our efforts in doing so, Mr. Speaker.

On that note, I just want to say to the people travelling up to Parry Sound that Parry Sound is open for business. That fire is 75 to 80 kilometres to the north. I think people going out this weekend—to ensure to continue to

go to those areas. Go to ontario.ca. See where the restriction areas are placed. When you do go to the north, start spending some extra money, because those people need the economic support that we are going to give them.

To the member opposite: We will continue to fight these fires. We will keep the public safe, and we will keep properties safe.

FIREFIGHTING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The forest fire burning in the north end of my riding since July 18, known as Parry Sound 33, has destroyed a huge area of more than 11,000 hectares and, despite being about 75 kilometres north of the town of Parry Sound, has scared a lot of people away from the whole area during this summer tourism season.

I recently heard that there have been some positive developments regarding this fire. Can the minister provide the House and the public with an update on the efforts to battle this forest fire?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for that question. I just want to take this opportunity one more time: On behalf of this Legislature and on behalf of the people of this province, I want to thank the fire crews that are working day in and day out and thank the support staff for taking on these fires and ensuring we keep the public safe and keep our properties safe.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that, over the weekend, the Parry Sound 33 fire—that the fire perimeter has been held. Crews have been able to lay over 300,000 feet of hose to help establish this perimeter around the entire fire and ensure that it's not spreading further. In many places, crews are now working steadily in from the perimeter to fight this fire.

While this progress is good news, evacuation orders and travel restrictions remain in place in the area. These measures have been put in place to ensure public safety while allowing fire personnel to safely and effectively suppress the fire.

I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that if you're going up to Parry Sound, go up and spend lots of money. Let's support northern Ontario; let's support their economy.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

Supplementary.

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Mr. Norman Miller: Back to the minister: Thank you for that answer. I know the people of Parry Sound district will be pleased to hear the fire is no longer spreading.

Most media coverage has been on the Parry Sound 33 fire; however, there are other large fires being fought in northern Ontario.

Can the minister provide an update on firefighting efforts in other parts of northern Ontario?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much for that supplemental.

I'm happy to report that a combination of improved weather over the weekend and the ongoing work by crews and teams across the province has led to an improved situation on many fires in this province.

Of note, the fire in Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Provincial Park in Temagami, one of the largest fires in the province, is now being held. Provincially, resources are in good supply and most of the actionable fires have received the support they require.

We again would like to commend the hard work and dedication of those who are fighting the fires and, at this time, also thank our partners: the other provinces that have sent help and the United States and Mexico for sending us their support, their firefighters and their equipment.

We will continue our fight against these fires until they are out. Thank you very much for that question.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Last year, Toronto police responded to over 23,000 mental health disturbance calls, there were 12,000 children waiting up to 18 months to access mental health services and front-line hospital staff experienced record levels of violence on the job.

Time and time again our first responders, our communities and our children bear witness to the cracks in our mental health services. Ontarians need more mental health services, not less.

Why is this government cutting \$335 million every year from mental health services?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to thank the member for the question but, in fact, it is incorrect. We are not cutting back on our commitment to funding mental health and addiction services; in fact, we're making the biggest commitment in Ontario's history. We're adding \$1.9 billion over 10 years to match the equal federal commitment; \$3.8 billion is a lot of money.

We are adding to previous commitments; there is no cut whatsoever. Because you're quite right: There is a lack of connection for services. We need to make sure our first responders are ready to be able to help people with mental health or addictions problems for their own safety and for the safety of the person who is not well.

We know we need to work with 12 different ministries to connect that patchwork of services to make sure that people have housing and that they have both the mental and physical health services they need to make sure they can get the education they need to be able to get out of poverty. There's a lot of work that needs to be done.

I'd like to answer more in the supplemental but I think it's important to note we are adding to—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you for mentioning housing. For years, mental health professionals have been calling

on the government to increase the number of supportive housing units to enable those facing mental health challenges to get the help that they need.

In my community of Scarborough people are waiting for more than 10 years to get supportive housing space. During the campaign, the Conservative Party campaigned on a promise to improve mental health services, not gut them.

Will this government tell the House why they are reneging on their promise?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We made a promise to the people of Ontario that we were going to build a comprehensive mental health and addictions system. We have \$3.8 billion to put into that over 10 years and that is what we are going to do.

We have to work on a variety of systems. We want to work with existing mental health service providers out there—CMHA and CAMH—and we want to work with children's mental health. We want to make sure that everyone from small children to seniors is connected.

But you're absolutely right; With respect to housing there is a lot more that needs to be done. They say everyone needs a job, a home and a friend; well, the home part is missing, in many places the job's missing, and the friends are missing too. We need to fix that. That's what we're going to do working across a variety of ministries. It's not going to be siloed anymore into, "This is the part that I deal with, this is the part that you deal with." You don't get a comprehensive system that way. It's too fragmented.

We are going to connect services and systems so that people will get the right help that they need when they need it.

TAXATION

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Last week, the Toronto Sun called the Liberals' carbon tax scheme plan a "Peter Pan approach to carbon pricing." The National Post proclaimed "the Liberals were in retreat over their"—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I ask the member, who is the question to? Which minister?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

After years of a government here at Queen's Park that rolled over any time the federal government asked for anything, we finally have a government that is standing up for the people—sorry, not sorry.

Will the Minister of the Environment commit to this place that he will continue to fight a Trudeau carbon tax of any kind and of any size?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member from Carleton: Thank you for that question.

Last week, I was very pleased to join my colleague the Attorney General as we announced our next steps as a government to fight the Trudeau carbon tax. Our government promised that we would take steps to protect Ontario families, to help job creators, at the same time as pursuing a real action plan that would support the future

of our environment. That plan will not include a regressive carbon tax.

We understand that carbon taxes are not effective, and the people of Ontario understand that a carbon tax will not be revenue neutral. We know it, Ontario businesses know it, the people of Ontario know it and now the Prime Minister is indicating that perhaps he knows it.

With all of the uncertainty in the economy today, with all of the tension in our trade relationships, Ontario does not need a job-killing carbon tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Back to the minister: I thank the minister for his response. It's no surprise the federal government's plan to impose a carbon tax on the people of Ontario is falling by the wayside. As the minister mentioned, last week our government announced our intentions to vigorously challenge the authority of the federal government to impose a national carbon plan.

I'm proud to know that we are on the side of the people. Just over a week ago, a new poll was released that reported that two thirds of Canadians—64%—agree with our policy and believe that provinces should have jurisdiction over how to reduce emissions.

Will the Minister of the Environment confirm that he will continue to fight for what's best and for what's right for the people?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member from Carleton: As the member noted, the federal government has started its climb-down after seeing the writing on the wall not just from the polls, which are interesting, but after direct feedback from Canadian business—Canadian businesses that went to them and said, "We can't be competitive globally when we have the pressure of this carbon tax."

The Trudeau government has finally admitted the carbon tax is a bad idea. A tax is a tax, and the federal government is acknowledging that the carbon tax is bad for jobs and bad for investment.

If the Prime Minister is willing to cut carbon tax deals with big business, he should not stop at half measures. He should be willing to eliminate his carbon tax on the people of Ontario. Our message to the Prime Minister was clear: Prime Minister, it's never too late to do the right thing. Scrap your carbon tax. Stand up for the families of Ontario. Stand up for jobs in Ontario.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Three weeks ago, I asked the minister if the anticipated 3% increase to social assistance rates would be going forward. I asked the minister this because constituents of mine I've spoken to in Ottawa have worried that this increase would not be honoured under her government.

The minister responded by saying, "I want to make sure that the people, particularly the most vulnerable, in our province and in our city are looked after."

Can the minister explain how cutting the incomes of poor people is going to help them?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to thank the member for his question. We actually are increasing rates by 1.5% across the board for those who are on Ontario Works and ODSP. We had to do this because we had to hit the pause button. The previous Liberal administration left our government a disjointed patchwork system that wasn't helping people.

1130

What we have decided to do is hit the pause button on that, make sure that a 1.5% across-the-board increase goes through on September 1 and ensure that in 94 days from today, that we have a plan that will lift people up, get them back to work where they can and assist those people who need it most.

I look forward to working with the honourable member opposite, listening to him and listening to those who are in poverty right now.

Did you know that, as a result of failed Liberal policies that that party supported 97% of the time, one in seven Ontarians are in poverty? That's unacceptable. We're going to change that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats.

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Joel Harden: Speaker, as much as I appreciate the aerobics on the other side, this is a cut, plain and simple. The 1.5% is well below the rate of inflation, and there are thousands of families in our city and in this province who will suffer as a result of that action.

In the meantime, my friends on the opposite side are happy to ask the poor and the disabled to do more with less, but you're cutting taxes on the most profitable corporations in this province by a billion dollars in lost revenue. So I have a question: Why is this government punishing people who are poor and disabled but handing out buckets in corporate welfare to your wealthy friends?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I welcome the member's question, and I look forward to speaking with him. But let me assure you that people in need will be heard, not only by me but this government. What we have said is that we are going to fix a disjointed, patchwork system that is keeping our most vulnerable down when we should be lifting them up and restoring dignity for those people who need it most.

If someone finds themselves requiring assistance from a program of last resort, we have a responsibility to support that person and get them stabilized and back on track.

But let me tell you something: The current system is broken. One in five people stay on Ontario Works for more than five years. One in seven people in Ontario are living in poverty. More than 200,000 people were added to social assistance over the past 15 years, and right now 46,000 people have been on Ontario Works for more than five years. The number of people who are relying on

ODSP has increased by 3% annually; that's 10,000 people every year.

We can do better. I can do better. We will together—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Next question. Start the clock.

TAXATION

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Attorney General: Last Thursday our government announced, in keeping with our commitment to people in Ontario, that we're launching our own challenge of the federal carbon tax in the Ontario Court of Appeal—a challenge we can win. This announcement was made a few short weeks after the Premier announced that Ontario will also be participating in Saskatchewan's challenge in the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal.

While we know that the Trudeau Liberals' carbon tax will obviously drive up the cost of goods and services we all rely on every day, some have been asking what the rationale is for participating in two challenges. Can the Attorney General share with this House why participating in two challenges is important?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I am happy to clarify the necessity of this approach. Ontario is working co-operatively with Saskatchewan to ensure that both provinces' references proceed as efficiently and as affordably as possible. Combined with our partners in Saskatchewan, our ask of our respective courts of appeal will allow for a broad consideration of all possible arguments regarding the validity of the federal carbon tax.

Anywhere the federal carbon tax is being constitutionally challenged, we want to be a part of that fight, Mr. Speaker. We believe this approach can only increase our likelihood of success. We were elected with a mandate to stand up for Ontario taxpayers, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Through you, Speaker, I would like to thank the Attorney General for that explanation. We all realize it's important we stand up for people in Ontario. I know this government is working hard to do just that. I also know it'll be a great day when we win this challenge for the people of Ontario.

To that end, I'm wondering if the Attorney General can speak a bit more about the benefits of our government's efforts and what we can see to benefit people in Ontario.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for the follow-up question.

I agree wholeheartedly with his comments. Challenging the Trudeau Liberals' carbon tax is important. Our

government campaigned on a promise to the people that we would work hard to put money back in taxpayers' pockets and bring real relief back to families. By challenging the federal carbon tax, we're working hard to deliver on these commitments.

As I said in this House last week, our ask of the Ontario Court of Appeal is to provide advice on whether or not the federal carbon tax is unconstitutional in whole or in part. Our legal team is going to work hard and has been working hard to build our case, and our government is confident in our position and that we will win.

I'm also confident that this challenge, which will be using in-house lawyers at the Ministry of the Attorney General, will cost significantly less than initially thought. Our government knows that this challenge will protect the hard-working people of Ontario from an—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH CARE

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Mr. Speaker.

Remarks in Oji-Cree.

My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. First Nations communities in my riding have been denied access to adequate health care for far too long. This has to change. There is a severe shortage of medical resources, safe health care infrastructure and medical professionals in northern communities. It's costing too many lives and causing too many people to suffer.

There was a document that was signed between Canada, Ontario and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation called the Charter of Relationship Principles Governing Health System Transformation in NAN Territory. Will this government commit to fully funding the First Nations health transformation, or will this government renege on that commitment and force people in our communities to continue to suffer?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member for the question. It is a very serious issue. We've had a brief conversation about it before. I recognize that there are serious problems with health care in northern Ontario and some of the fly-in communities as well. This is a priority for me. I look forward to working with you to make sure that we can improve health care outcomes for people across the province. It is unequal distribution. There are inequities there. I do take it seriously. I would like to hear more from you and work with you on this.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: The needs of the people of the real north cannot be ignored any longer. In Sandy Lake, the nursing station model is not working anymore; it services 3,000-plus. Local residents are filling the gaps because there aren't enough medical professionals.

In Sandy Lake, Pikangikum and other remote fly-in communities, little children—like five-year-old Brody Meekis—have died of strep throat infections that would have been cured anywhere else. Every single day I hear

of families who cannot get the urgent health care they need.

The charter I spoke about calls for accountability, responsibility and resource allocation directly to the communities. Will the minister guarantee that every dollar that's been committed to First Nations health care will be delivered to our communities?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I was aware of the child who died from strep throat because basic antibiotics weren't at the nursing station. I have had the opportunity to visit Sandy Lake, and I know there are many other communities that are in a similar situation.

As we have discussed, part of the problem is the fact that there is federal responsibility for some of the fly-in communities to provide health services, but the provincial government operates the ambulance and, of course, the hospital services. They need to be better coordinated.

I certainly will be speaking with the federal minister about that, but I know there are many other issues that need to be solved so that we don't lose children, we don't lose people in communities. That would not happen in other parts of Ontario; I agree with you. Much work needs to be done, and I look forward to working with you on that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon

The House recessed from 1140 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: In my riding of Beaches–East York lives a woman I'll call Alice. Alice is a single mom with two kids. Her daughter attends one of the local high schools. Alice's son is 10 years old and has a disability that requires him to have frequent appointments at the Holland Bloorview kids rehab hospital. Alice can't afford to hire someone to take her son to these appointments, so she takes him herself, and because the appointments are so frequent, she can't take a regular job and relies on social assistance to keep her family housed and fed. Alice's landlord recently evicted her on the grounds that he needed her rooms for a family member. She's having terrible trouble finding somewhere else to live.

Also in my riding lives a man I'll call George. George has worked hard all his life. He's a senior now and is being treated for cancer. He relies on ODSP payments to keep a roof over his head. George is on a wait-list for social housing, but he doesn't know how long he'll be on the list, and meanwhile the rents in his apartment building creep up and up and up.

Homelessness is a real threat for George and Alice and countless others like them. Now the minister of social services has slashed their OW and ODSP. I would like

the minister to look George and Alice in the eye and tell them how compassionate these cuts are. Cutting social assistance in the middle of an affordable housing crisis is not what compassion looks like in Beaches–East York or anywhere else in Ontario.

BLANDINE POTVIN

M. Guy Bourgouin: Le 11 août, je vais participer à la fête d'une jeune dame nommée Blandine Potvin à Val Rita-Harty. La jeune dame est née le 4 septembre 1918. Blandine va fêter ses 100 ans le 11 août à Val Rita.

Blandine est originaire de Saint-Félicien au Lac Saint-Jean. M^{me} Blandine et son mari, Edgard Potvin, sont arrivés à Val Rita en 1953. Ils sont venus s'établir à Val Rita pour cultiver un lot de terre et commencer leur famille. M^{me} Blandine et M. Potvin ont eu 15 enfants. Sa fille Véronique me disait que Blandine et Edgar ont plus de 125 descendants. Dû au nombre d'enfants, M. Potvin a dû aller travailler à la ferme expérimentale de Kapuskasing. Malheureusement, M. Potvin est décédé en 1999, et Blandine ne s'est jamais remariée.

Je veux prendre l'opportunité ici dans cette Chambre pour souhaiter une bonne fête à une centenaire de Val Rita-Harty, M^{me} Blandine Potvin.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr. Jeff Burch: Last week I met with two community legal clinics: Justice Niagara and Niagara North Community Legal Assistance. They came to meet with me to discuss this government's action in decreasing ODSP rates. The government claims this is not a reduction. Let's not play semantics. Clearly, it is the reduction of the anticipated 3% increase to 1.5%.

People on ODSP do not have other options. They have been deemed medically unable to work. This action takes from the most vulnerable in our communities. This change will have significant impacts for Niagara in particular. Landlords are able to increase rents on tenants, including tenants in affordable housing, by 1.8% this year. Mr. Speaker, it's simple math: 1.5% minus 1.8% equals homelessness.

Rents are increasing and ODSP rates are not increasing at a rate that can offset other increases to the cost of living. People in Niagara are being forced to sleep under bridges as shelters are operating at or over capacity. Moreover, for any ODSP recipient who is fortunate enough to find a job, they will now no longer be able to keep their earnings because this government, which claims it is all about putting people back to work, has cancelled the increase to the earning exemption. Instead of being increased to \$400, it will remain at just \$100. This is hypocritical and sends the opposite message the government claims to promote.

This government needs to get a handle on its priorities and put the plight of individuals with disabilities ahead of their promise to subsidize cheap beer.

AIDE SOCIALE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Il me fait plaisir de me lever aujourd'hui, monsieur le Président, pour présenter certains enjeux qui sont très importants pour ma communauté d'Ottawa-Vanier.

Ottawa-Vanier has great communities. We have demonstrated resilience, creativity and strength. Many of my constituents participated in the Income Security: A Roadmap for Change consultations that led to the October 2017 report, a report that outlines some concrete, well-thought-out reforms to social assistance to make it more efficient and better at lifting people out of poverty and respecting their dignity.

I want to repeat a quote from the first paragraph: "Ontario's income security system affects us all." No matter what your background, your successes or your challenges, we all share an interest in supporting people's ability to thrive.

It's important for me to see this report implemented. It doesn't matter whose government put it forward; it was the result of lots of consultation and I hope that the minister reconsiders the pause button that she's put on the implementation of this report. This is very important for my community and for all who are on social assistance. Great ideas don't have a colour attached to them.

Alors, je voudrais vraiment encourager la ministre à comprendre la nécessité de tenir compte de ces recommandations qui sont le fruit d'un travail de deux ans, et j'espère qu'elle va pouvoir les mettre en vigueur d'ici prochainement.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the price of gasoline in Timmins today: \$1.42. My God, what a few months have done. Just before the election, on June 6, do you know how much the price of gas was in Timmins? It was \$1.28.

So here we are: \$1.28 to \$1.42. And these are the gas companies that, again, decided to gouge consumers because they know the Ford government is going to do a reduction on the tax on gas by about five cents. So what do they do? They say, "Rather than us raising the price after he removes the tax, let's do it in front of it. That way it won't look like a reduction."

I've just got to say to the government across the way, clearly something has to be done to bring these gas companies in line, and gas price regulation, as in the bill proposed by the NDP, is the way to do that.

Now, the government has decided to do something else. They've decided to use their powers, as they would call them, and some would even say regulatory powers, to give us a buck a beer. Mr. Speaker, what kind of priority is that, when the government is prepared to subsidize the cost of beer but is not prepared to protect consumers at the pumps when it comes to the price of gas? I think this is a government that has lost its way and

doesn't represent the people as they purport to. They represent the interests of the big and mighty and those who are there to make money and it's we, the consumers, who are going to pay all the way to the pumps.

This government has got to learn: Either you stand with people all of the time or you don't. In your case, you don't stand with people.

1510

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ZEBRA MUSSEL ANALYSIS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ANALYSE CONCERNANT LES MOULES ZÉBRÉES

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15 (1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of Cana Lake, Canal Bay, Canal Lake, Canard Lake, Canard River, Canary Lake, Cancer Lake, Candide Creek, Candide Lake, Candler Lake, Candybar Creek, Candybar Lake, Candy Creek, Cane Lake, Canisbay Creek, Canisbay Lake, Canis Lake, Canister Creek, Canister Lake, Can Lake, Canna Creek, Canna Lake, Cannard's Bay, Canniff Creek, Canniff Lake, Canning Lake, Cannings Falls, Cannon Creek, Cannon Lake, Canoe Bay, Canoe Bay Channel, Canoe Channel, Canoe Creek and Canoe Lake / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en application du paragraphe 15 (1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau suivants : Cana Lake, Canal Bay, Canal Lake, Canard Lake, Canard River, Canary Lake, Cancer Lake, Candide Creek, Candide Lake, Candler Lake, Candybar Creek, Candybar Lake, Candy Creek, Cane Lake, Canisbay Creek, Canisbay Lake, Canis Lake, Canister Creek, Canister Lake, Can Lake, Canna Creek, Canna Lake, Cannard's Bay, Canniff Creek, Canniff Lake, Canning Lake, Cannings Falls, Cannon Creek, Cannon Lake, Canoe Bay, Canoe Bay Channel, Canoe Channel, Canoe Creek et Canoe Lake.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Introduction of bills?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Hang on; I have the explanatory note.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Oh, sorry. You're right. The member for Timmins can explain his bill.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of this bill is to require the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to

discharge the responsibility under section 15(1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of specific waterways, as mentioned in the bill.

ZEBRA MUSSEL COUNT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE DÉNOMBREMENT DES MOULES ZÉBRÉES

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15 (1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of Carcass Lake, Card Bay, Carder Lake, Cardiff Creek, Cardiff Lake, Cardinal Creek, Cardinalis Lake, Cardinal Lake, Card Lake, Cards Lake, Cardwell Lake, Carew Lake, Carey Creek, Carey Lake, Carfrae Lake, Cargill Lake, Cargill Mill Pond, Carhess Creek, Cariad Lake, Carib Creek, Carib Lake, Cariboo Creek, Cariboo Lake, Caribou Bay, Caribou Creek, Caribou Lake, Caribou Rapids, Caribou River, Caribou Throat Lake, Caribus Lake, Carillon Rapids, Carkner Lake, Car Lake, Carl Bay, Carlbom Lake, Carl Creek, Carleton Lake, Carling Bay, Carling Lake, Carl Lake, Carlo Lake, Carlson Lake, Carlstead Bay, Carlton Lake, Carlyle Lake, Carman Bay, Carman Creek, Carman Lake, Carmichael Lake, Carnachan Bay, Carnahan Lake, Carney Creek, Carney Lake and Carnilac Lake / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en application du paragraphe 15 (1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau suivants : Carcass Lake, Card Bay, Carder Lake, Cardiff Creek, Cardiff Lake, Cardinal Creek, Cardinalis Lake, Cardinal Lake, Card Lake, Cards Lake, Cardwell Lake, Carew Lake, Carey Creek, Carey Lake, Carfrae Lake, Cargill Lake, Cargill Mill Pond, Carhess Creek, Cariad Lake, Carib Creek, Carib Lake, Cariboo Creek, Cariboo Lake, Caribou Bay, Caribou Creek, Caribou Lake, Caribou Rapids, Caribou River, Caribou Throat Lake, Caribus Lake, Carillon Rapids, Carkner Lake, Car Lake, Carl Bay, Carlbom Lake, Carl Creek, Carleton Lake, Carling Bay, Carling Lake, Carl Lake, Carlo Lake, Carlson Lake, Carlstead Bay, Carlton Lake, Carlyle Lake, Carman Bay, Carman Creek, Carman Lake, Carmichael Lake, Carnachan Bay, Carnahan Lake, Carney Creek, Carney Lake et Carnilac Lake.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member may give a brief explanation of his bill.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The purpose of the bill is to require the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection

15(1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of specific waterways.

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ZEBRA MUSSEL EVALUATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ÉVALUATION DES MOULES ZÉBRÉES

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15 (1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of Caro Lake, Caroline Lake, Carol Lake, Carolyn Creek, Caron Creek, Caron Lake, Carpenter Lake, Carpenter River, Carpet Lake, Carp Lake, Carp River, Carre Lake, Carrick Creek, Carrick Lake, Carrie Lake, Carrie Lake, Carriere Lake, Carrigan Lake, Carrington Lake, Carroll Creek, Carroll Lake, Carroll Wood Bay, Carrot Lake, Carruthers Lake, Carrying Lake, Carry Lake, Carscallen Lake, Carson Bay, Carson Creek, Carson Lake, Carss Creek, Carstens Lake, Carswell Lake, Cartan Lake, Carter Bay, Carter Lake, Carter Rapids, Carthew Bay, Cartier Lake, Cartier Creek, Cart Lake, Cartwrights Creek, Carty Creek, Carty Lake, Carver Lake, Cascade Falls, Cascade Lake, Cascaden Lake, Cascade Rapids, Cascade River, Cascanette Lake, Case River, Casey Creek and Casey Lake / Projet de loi 16, Loi visant à exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en application du paragraphe 15 (1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau suivants : Caro Lake, Caroline Lake, Carol Lake, Carolyn Creek, Caron Creek, Caron Lake, Carpenter Lake, Carpenter River, Carpet Lake, Carp Lake, Carp River, Carre Lake, Carrick Creek, Carrick Lake, Carrie Lake, Carrie Lake, Carriere Lake, Carrigan Lake, Carrington Lake, Carroll Creek, Carroll Lake, Carroll Wood Bay, Carrot Lake, Carruthers Lake, Carrying Lake, Carry Lake, Carscallen Lake, Carson Bay, Carson Creek, Carson Lake, Carss Creek, Carstens Lake, Carswell Lake, Cartan Lake, Carter Bay, Carter Lake, Carter Rapids, Carthew Bay, Cartier Lake, Cartier Creek, Cart Lake, Cartwrights Creek, Carty Creek, Carty Lake, Carver Lake, Cascade Falls, Cascade Lake, Cascaden Lake, Cascade Rapids, Cascade River, Cascanette Lake, Case River, Casey Creek et Casey Lake.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member may give a brief explanation of his bill.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The purpose of this bill is to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation

and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15(1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of specific waterways.

COUNTING ZEBRA MUSSELS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE RECENSEMENT DES MOULES ZÉBRÉES

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15 (1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of Casgrain Creek, Casgrain Lake, Cash Creek, Cashel Lake, Cashman Creek, Cashore Creek, Casino Lake, Caskie Bay, Caskill Lake, Cask Lake, Casper Lake, Casque Lake, Cassdaga Lake, Casselman's Lake and Casselman's Creek, Cassels Lake, Cassidy Bay, Cassidy Creek, Cassidy Lake, Cassidy's Bay, Cass Lake, Casson Lake, Castellar Creek, Castellar Lake, Castlebar Creek, Castlebar Lake, Castle Bay, Castle Creek, Castle Lake, Castleman Lake, Castlewood Creek, Castlewood Lake, Castor Creek, Castor Lake, Castoroil Lake, Castor Ponds, Castor River, Castra Lake, Casurnmit Lake, Caswell Bay, Casvell Lake, Cataract Falls, Cataract Lake, Cataraqui Bay and Cataraqui River / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en application du paragraphe 15 (1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau suivants : Casgrain Creek, Casgrain Lake, Cash Creek, Cashel Lake, Cashman Creek, Cashore Creek, Casino Lake, Caskie Bay, Caskill Lake, Cask Lake, Casper Lake, Casque Lake, Cassdaga Lake, Casselman's Lake and Casselman's Creek, Cassels Lake, Cassidy Bay, Cassidy Creek, Cassidy Lake, Cassidy's Bay, Cass Lake, Casson Lake, Castellar Creek, Castellar Lake, Castlebar Creek, Castlebar Lake, Castle Bay, Castle Creek, Castle Lake, Castleman Lake, Castlewood Creek, Castlewood Lake, Castor Creek, Castor Lake, Castoroil Lake, Castor Ponds, Castor River, Castra Lake, Casurnmit Lake, Caswell Bay, Casvell Lake, Cataract Falls, Cataract Lake, Cataraqui Bay et Cataraqui River.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

1530

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member may give a brief explanation of his bill.

M. Gilles Bisson: Le projet de loi a pour objet d'exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en appliquant le paragraphe 15(1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la qualité—oh, excusez-moi, la quantité de moules; ça ne peut pas être la qualité, pour sûr—la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau désignés.

STATUS OF ZEBRA MUSSELS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ÉTAT DES MOULES ZÉBRÉES

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15 (1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of Catastrophe Creek, Catastrophe Lake, Catawba Lake, Cat Bay, Catchacoma Lake, Catcher Lake, Cat Creek, Caterpillar Lake, Cat Falls, Catfish Bay, Catfish Creek, Catfish Lake, Catfish Rapids, Catharine Lake, Cathro Lake, Cathy's Lake, Catlonite Creek, Catlonite Lake, Cat River, Cat Tail River, Catral Lake, Cauchon Creek, Cauchon Lake, Caulfield Lake, Cauley Lake, Cauliflower Creek, Cauliflower Lake, Caulkin Lake, Caution Lake, Cavalary Creek, Cavalary Lake, Cavanagh Lake, Cavan Creek, Cavano Lake, Cave Harbour, Cave Lake, Cavell Creek, Cavell Lake, Cavendish Lake, Caverly's Bay, Cavern Creek, Cavern Lake, Cavers Bay, Cavern Creek, Cavern Lake, Cavers Creek, Cavers Lake, Caviar Lake, Cawanogami Lake, Cawdron Creek, Cawdron Lake, Cawing Lake, Cawston Lakes, Cawthra Creek, Caya's Lake and Cayer Creek / Projet de loi 18, Loi visant à exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en application du paragraphe 15 (1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau suivants : Catastrophe Creek, Catastrophe Lake, Catawba Lake, Cat Bay, Catchacoma Lake, Catcher Lake, Cat Creek, Caterpillar Lake, Cat Falls, Catfish Bay, Catfish Creek, Catfish Lake, Catfish Rapids, Catharine Lake, Cathro Lake, Cathy's Lake, Catlonite Creek, Catlonite Lake, Cat River, Cat Tail River, Catral Lake, Cauchon Creek, Cauchon Lake, Caulfield Lake, Cauley Lake, Cauliflower Creek, Cauliflower Lake, Caulkin Lake, Caution Lake, Cavalary Creek, Cavalary Lake, Cavanagh Lake, Cavan Creek, Cavano Lake, Cave Harbour, Cave Lake, Cavell Creek, Cavell Lake, Cavendish Lake, Caverly's Bay, Cavern Creek, Cavern Lake, Cavers Bay, Cavern Creek, Cavern Lake, Cavers Creek, Cavers Lake, Caviar Lake, Cawanogami Lake, Cawdron Lake, Cawing Lake, Cawston Lakes, Cawthra Creek, Caya's Lake et Cayer Creek.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I return to the member for a brief statement.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The purpose of this bill is to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibility under section 15(1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel count of specific waterways.

ZEBRA MUSSEL SURVEY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE DÉCOMPTÉ
DES MOULES ZÉBRÉES

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to discharge the responsibilities under subsection 15 (1) of the Ontario Water Resources Act to determine the zebra mussel content of Cayer Lake, Cayiens Creek, Caysee Lake, Cayuga Creek, Cayuga Lake, Cebush Lake, Cecebe Lake, Cecil Creek, Cecile Lake, Cedar Bay, Cedarbough Lake, Cedarclump Lake, Cedar Creek, Cedar Falls, Cedargum Lake, Cedar Harbour, Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Cedar River, Cedarskirt Lake, Cedric Lake, Cee Creek, Ceepee Lake, Celastruc Lake, Cellist Lake, Celt Creek, Celtis Lake, Celt Lake, Cemetery Creek, Cemetery Lake, Centennial Lake, Centralis Creek, Centralis Lake, Central Lake, Centre Channel, Centre Creek, Centre Falls, Centrefire Creek, Centrefire Lake, Centre Lake, Centreville Creek, Ceph Lake, Ceres Lake, Cerulean Lake, Cerullo Lake, Chabbie Lake, Chabbie River, Chabot Lake, Chadwick Lake, Chagma Lake, Chagnon Lake and Chaillon Lake / Projet de loi 19, Loi visant à exiger que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs assume ses responsabilités en application du paragraphe 15 (1) de la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario pour établir la quantité de moules zébrées dans les cours d'eau suivants : Cayer Lake, Cayiens Creek, Caysee Lake, Cayuga Creek, Cayuga Lake, Cebush Lake, Cecebe Lake, Cecil Creek, Cecile Lake, Cedar Bay, Cedarbough Lake, Cedarclump Lake, Cedar Creek, Cedar Falls, Cedargum Lake, Cedar Harbour, Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Cedar River, Cedarskirt Lake, Cedric Lake, Cee Creek, Ceepee Lake, Celastruc Lake, Cellist Lake, Celt Creek, Celtis Lake, Celt Lake, Cemetery Creek, Cemetery Lake, Centennial Lake, Centralis Creek, Centralis Lake, Central Lake, Centre Channel, Centre Creek, Centre Falls, Centrefire Creek, Centrefire Lake, Centre Lake, Centreville Creek, Ceph Lake, Ceres Lake, Cerulean Lake, Cerullo Lake, Chabbie Lake, Chabbie River, Chabot Lake, Chadwick Lake, Chagma Lake, Chagnon Lake et Chaillon Lake.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? No. The motion hasn't carried.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1538 to 1543.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak
Armstrong, Teresa J.

Gill, Parm
Hardeman, Ernie

Romano, Ross
Sabawy, Sheref

Baber, Roman	Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Scott, Laurie
Bailey, Robert	Hassan, Faisal	Simard, Amanda
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karahalios, Belinda	Singh, Sara
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Skelly, Donna
Bouma, Will	Kramp, Daryl	Smith, Todd
Bourgouin, Guy	Kusendova, Natalia	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Lindo, Laura Mae	Tabuns, Peter
Calandra, Paul	MacLeod, Lisa	Tangri, Nina
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Coe, Lorne	McKenna, Jane	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Coteau, Michael	Miller, Norman	Thompson, Lisa M.
Crawford, Stephen	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Morrison, Suze	Wai, Daisy
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Walker, Bill
Fee, Amy	Rakocevic, Tom	
Ghamari, Goldie	Rasheed, Kaleed	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All those opposed, please stand and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 55; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 33(f), the time for introduction of bills has now expired.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that the meeting schedule of the House for Wednesday, August 8, as set out in standing order 8(a), be revised by substituting "1 p.m." and "1:05 p.m." for "3 p.m." and "3:05 p.m.," respectively.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Smith has moved that the meeting schedule of the House for Wednesday, August 8—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Point of order, the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We all understand the cut and thrust of the House, and that's the way that this place operates and I respect that, but I think the government is somewhat overreaching in its authorities under the standing orders in order to go there. I know what it says for routine motions, I know what it says for substantive motions, but this is a little bit out of the ordinary. In my 28 years, I've never seen the government change the time of the House and I would argue that makes it substantive.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please.

Under standing order 2, "Recognized party" means a party caucus of eight or more members of the Legislative Assembly. ('parti reconnu')

“Routine motion” means any motion, including motions under standing order 6, made for the purpose of fixing the days or times of the meetings or adjournments of the House, or its committees, establishing or revising the membership of committees, and the meeting schedule thereof; arranging the proceedings of the House; or any other motion relating strictly to the technical procedure of the House or its committees and the management of the business thereof. (“motion d’affaire courante”)

According to this it’s a routine motion and it is in order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Point of order, the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The difference here is, they’re specifying one day, not the entire calendar. The point I’m making here is that if you’re changing the calendar, that’s one thing; specifying one day makes it a substantive motion, Mr. Speaker. I would argue that this is in fact a substantive motion because they’re specifying a day, period.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you for your input. I have ruled it in order. So the motion is in order.

To the House: a motion by Mr. Smith that the meeting schedule of the House for Wednesday, August 8, as set out in 8(a), be revised by substituting “1 p.m.” and “1:05 p.m.” for “3 p.m.” and “3:05 p.m.,” respectively. Does the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1551 to 1621.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All members will please take their seats.

Mr. Smith, the member from Bay of Quinte, has moved that the meeting schedule of the House for Wednesday, August 8, as set out in standing order 8(a), be revised by substituting “1 p.m.” and “1:05 p.m.” for “3 p.m.” and “3:05 p.m.,” respectively.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Baber, Roman	Hillier, Randy	Roberts, Jeremy
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Ke, Vincent	Schreiner, Mike
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kramp, Daryl	Simard, Amanda
Cho, Stan	Kusendova, Natalia	Singh Sarkaria, Prabmeet
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McDonell, Jim	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	Miller, Norman	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	Nicholls, Rick	Tibollo, Michael A.

Fedeli, Victor
Fee, Amy
Fullerton, Merrilee
Ghamari, Goldie
Gill, Parm
Hardeman, Ernie

Oosterhoff, Sam
Pang, Billy
Parsa, Michael
Pettapiece, Randy
Phillips, Rod
Piccini, David

Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Wai, Daisy
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All those opposed will now rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Begum, Doly
Berns-McGown, Rima
Bisson, Gilles
Bourgoin, Guy
Burch, Jeff
Harden, Joel

Hassan, Faisal
Kernaghan, Terence
Lindo, Laura Mae
Mamakwa, Sol
Mantha, Michael
Monteith-Farrell, Judith
Morrison, Suze

Rakocevic, Tom
Sattler, Peggy
Singh, Guratan
Singh, Sara
Stiles, Marit
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 66; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

WEARING OF POPPIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: From the good people in Algoma-Manitoulin I have a petition entitled “I Wear My Poppy With Pride and Respect.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the poppy is a powerful symbol of remembrance worn by millions the world over with respect and gratitude for those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect peace and freedom for all people;

“Whereas the poppy has been the principal emblem of the Royal Canadian Legion since its inception in 1925;

“Whereas the poppy is an enduring symbol of sacrifice that was initially inspired by the Canadian poet and soldier John McCrae while in the trenches in the Second Battle of Ypres, Belgium, during World War I;

“Whereas the use or reference to the universal poppy symbol for purposes other than remembrance and respect for fallen servicemen and -women and peacekeepers worldwide may be offensive and disrespectful in the minds of their family, friends and comrades;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: educate and promote the poppy as a universal symbol of remembrance of sacrifice, and that its heritage and origin from Canadian roots be highlighted. With this positive focus and purpose in mind,

“We further petition” the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to demonstrate leadership in this endeavour by exemplifying respect and pride in the poppy symbol when referred to by members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and provincial political parties.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and I present it to page Adam to bring it down to the Clerks' table.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition.

"Fund Our Schools.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas too many children are going to school in buildings without proper heating or cooling, with leaky roofs or stairways overdue for repair;

"Whereas after years of Conservative and Liberal governments neglecting schools, the backlog of needed repairs has reached \$16 billion;

"Whereas during the 2018 election, numerous members of the Conservative Party, including the current Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario's schools;

"Whereas less than three weeks into the legislative session, Doug Ford and the Conservative government have already cut \$100 million in much-needed school repairs, leaving our children and educators to suffer in classrooms that are unsafe and unhealthy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut \$100 million in school repair funding, and invest the \$16 billion needed to tackle the repair backlog in Ontario schools."

Speaker, I fully agree with this petition. I sign it and give it to page Jamie to deliver to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Sara Singh: This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

"Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

"Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers...;

"Make it illegal to pay part-time temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers...;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection."

I sign this and give it to page Sullivan.

1630

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm proud to present this petition on behalf of Barbara Aufgang, who is actually a resident of Thornhill and asked me to present this to the Legislature. It's entitled, "Protecting Children: Forward, Not Backward, on Sex Ed.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the health and physical education curriculum empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and their bodies;

"Whereas gender-based violence, gender inequality, unintended pregnancies, 'sexting,' and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections ... pose serious risks to the safety and well-being of young people;

"Whereas one in three women and one in six men experience sexual violence in Canada, and a lack of age-appropriate education about sexual health and healthy relationships leaves children and youth vulnerable to exploitation;

"Whereas one in five parents reported their own child being a victim of cyberbullying; and

"Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, requiring students to learn an outdated sex ed curriculum that excludes information about consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexting, cyberbullying and safe and healthy relationships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to continue the use of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum in schools and move Ontario forward, not backward."

I support this petition—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads, "Stop the Cuts to Indigenous Reconciliation.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been on this land for at least 12,000 years;

"Whereas in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report: 'Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future' which made 94 recommendations or 'Calls to Action' for the government of Canada;

"Whereas reconciliation must be at the centre of all government decision-making;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"—continue reconciliation work in Ontario by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

“—work with First Nations leaders to sign co-operative government-to-government accords;

“—support TRC education and community development...;

“—support Indigenous communities across the province (e.g. cleaning up Grassy Narrows).”

I fully support this petition. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Adam to bring to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 30(c), the time for routine proceedings has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L’AMÉLIORATION DES ADMINISTRATIONS LOCALES

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 2, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? I recognize the member from Markham–Stouffville.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I thought somebody else was speaking first. So how do you like that?

Applause.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Well, thank you.

I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak a little bit about Bill 5, which brings very important legislation forward which will not only help the city of Toronto but will also help, both directly and indirectly, the regional municipality of York, which I represent, of course—the riding of Markham–Stouffville.

If I can, Mr. Speaker, I’d just ask that perhaps one of the pages could bring me some water. I thought I had a few extra minutes. Thank you very much.

I was actually very happy to see that the member for Etobicoke North, the Premier, brought this bill forward, for a number of reasons. As I said, I represent Markham–Stouffville, so I’m going to begin by focusing some of my comments on that area.

Part of what we had decided to do with Bill 5 was to put an end to regional council chair elections that were supposed to be scheduled for this year. Now, at the outset, obviously a lot of people have suggested on both sides of the House that direct election of a regional chair would be a good thing. But in this particular instance, the people of York region, in particular those who were

elected to the regional council, were very, very clear on the fact that they were not in support of the changes to the council that had been proposed by the previous government. It, of course, was a bill that I think was put in as part of an economic statement by the previous government. All of the mayors who serve on regional council voted against that. In fact, I think only four members of the entire regional council had voted in favour of direct election of the chair.

Now, part of the reason for our desire to hold things back, or as the minister has stated, part of the reason for the pause and the positive reaction that we’ve gotten from York region, was that there had not really been an undertaking to look at how regional government was to represent people going forward, especially in the area of the direct election of a regional chair. York region was created back in 1970. The region was created when 14 municipalities were amalgamated into nine municipalities. Very little had changed in York region with respect to the governance of how we governed ourselves in that time period.

When I had spoken at outreach to the mayors in my community, the mayor of Markham, in particular—I spoke to Chairman Emmerson recently. Part of the thing—and I think it was very intelligent of them. They said, “Listen, the reason why we had to bring a pause and why it was smart for the government to bring a pause at this time is that the cost of running a campaign to be the regional chair was going to be a significant one.” York region is a municipality, as a whole, of 1.3 million people. It has certainly changed since its creation back in 1970. It is a community that has very dense urban areas to the south, but also some very sparsely developed and rural areas to the north.

Part of the things that we had discussed in consulting with constituents and with elected officials in the area is that they wanted to know what would be the powers of regional chairperson following his or her direct election. A chairperson in York region has a significant amount of power, far more power than the mayor of one of the communities that it represents—more power than the mayor of Toronto. But the legislation, as it was presented and passed, did not change the powers of the regional chair, and that was a big concern.

We also heard from a number of other people who suggested that perhaps regional council could be changed in other ways. I had heard two different approaches: that perhaps regional council become something where just mayors sat on with a directly elected chairman, or mayors and an appointed chair; still others thought that mayors should be removed from York region council, and regional councils would be directly elected without mayors. A lot of people had suggested that part of the reason why they wanted to remove the mayors from the council was their divided loyalties. Were they more loyal to the town or city that they represented, or would they have been more loyal to the region of York? There was a lot of discussion that that should have been fleshed out before we moved to a direct election of a regional chair.

There's also the very odd aspect of regional governments in York region—perhaps it's not the case in other areas. But York region councillors, by and large, are all elected at large. When I look at the city of Markham, its four regional councillors—the mayor notwithstanding—are elected at large. They don't represent a specific ward; they represent the entire city of Markham. Individuals have come to me and said that that makes it very difficult to hold regional councillors accountable for the decisions that they make, and still others have said that any modifications of York region council or regional councillors as a whole ought to also consider changing the system of how our regional councillors are elected, and putting them into a ward system. In parts of York region, there is only one councillor who serves on the region.

1640

I look at my town of Stouffville, Mr. Speaker. I'll spend a moment or two talking about my hometown of Stouffville. There's one regional councillor. That regional councillor happens to be the mayor of Stouffville. The mayor of Stouffville—it has been publicized; it's not something that I'm speaking out of turn on—has faced three integrity commissioner investigations. He is currently forbidden from entering the town hall and he is currently forbidden from interacting with town staff, which has made it very, very difficult for this mayor, who serves on regional council, to represent the people of Stouffville at regional council, yet we don't have another option. The people of Stouffville do not have another option at regional council. We have a mayor who has, as I said, been the subject of three integrity commissioner reports and findings of guilt. He has very, very difficult and harsh sanctions against him, for various reasons as outlined by the integrity commissioner, which has left us without a mayor who can practise or do his full job, and at the same time has left us without proper representation on regional council. Direct election of a regional chair would not do anything to solve that problem in those municipalities where only one regional councillor exists.

The other aspect we have, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, is York region. I'm just going to focus on York region because that's the community that I represent. York region has a very big divide—urban and rural. That's the same with the community that I represent in Stouffville. The southern part of my riding in Markham is very urban, very dense. Often the issues that are important to the people of Markham are at odds with the people who live in the northern part of my riding in Stouffville, which is still very rural. It depends on farming, which is our number one industry. Decisions, however, that have been made by previous Conservative, Liberal and, in fact, way back, NDP governments in the early 1990s have left the northern parts of some of our communities, including Stouffville, unable to grow their industrial and commercial tax base.

The reason that's important, Mr. Speaker, is because some of these communities, including Stouffville, face what could be double-digit property tax increases because most of the land is frozen. They have been built

out. Once development charges start to decrease, they will have a very difficult time making ends meet and ensuring that their residents have the services they need.

The reason that that's important, Mr. Speaker, is that in the regional context, areas like Stouffville, or King township, which faces a very similar set of circumstances, are going to be relying on the regional government to take up services. This could mean amalgamation of the fire service, in part. Stouffville is a community of some 45,000 people. The southern part is very urban. We have full-time firefighters in the south. In the north, we don't have full-time firefighters. In the north, we don't have high-speed Internet. With a regional government, we were able to get better access to high-speed Internet.

We have policing services. We have ambulance services. But it's becoming very, very clear that, in the very near future, some of the rural communities to the north are going to be needing to rely on the regional government in a much bigger way than they have in the past. That is one of the reasons why a lot of the municipalities—most of the regional councillors voted and wanted this stopped, wanted a pause put on this, because they wanted to make sure that if regional government was to be reformed, it wouldn't just stop with an election of a regional chair; it had to look at all of the things that have happened in government or that government would need to do over the next number of years to make sure that all the municipalities and the residents within those municipalities could afford to live in those communities, could be safe, and have access to similar types of services.

That's why, in part, I was very pleased and, as I said, a vast majority of the regional councillors were pleased that the government put a pause to this. I think, over the next coming years—I know that I've already started to reach out to some of my colleagues on this side of the House who represent the communities in York region, the mayors and different councillors, to talk about how we can make York region governance better than it is today. That may one day include the election of a regional chair, but not before we understand what the powers of the chair will be and, as I said, not before we understand who should do what, what service delivery might be more effective and where the communities that are within York region are at in terms of their growth, where their property taxpayers will be, and can we afford to maintain the levels of service that we've come to expect without regional government taking a bigger approach.

The other area of the bill, and one of the areas that a lot of people have obviously focused on in this House, is the changes at the council of the city of Toronto, the reduction in the size of the council. One of the things I've heard is, if we're going to reduce the size of the city of Toronto council, does that mean we should look at other municipalities and start reducing the size of other municipalities' to match the federal-provincial boundaries? Mr. Speaker, obviously, that is a silly comparison.

Look, I was a federal member of Parliament who represented the largest riding in Canada in terms of population—or very, very close to it. I represented in

Ottawa and there was a provincial member of Parliament who represented the same riding. I represented 350,000 people as a federal member of Parliament, whereas the entire island of Prince Edward Island is about 125,000 people, with four members of Parliament and four senators. My riding had myself and the provincial member of Parliament.

I know in this House that there are members who represent much larger communities than other members. I know that some of the urban areas are twice the size of some of the rural areas. I don't suspect that the rural members who represent smaller communities or smaller population bases—I don't think that they work any less than I do, but they work differently.

There is a convention in this country, or at least in this province, whereby as municipalities grow, we turn to a regional form of government first; that was the case in the city of Toronto when we created Metro. Then there are greater amalgamations that reduce the size of councils and, by that, reduce the number of elected politicians, which was the case in the early 1970s. Fast-forward to the creation of the city of Toronto—again, the elimination of a level of government. But the convention has been, honestly, since the creation of this province, that as a municipality grows, as it begins to prosper, as it becomes more urban and more responsible, the number of politicians decreases and the power and authorities of those councillors increase.

There are a number of municipalities, including many in York region, whose councillors are part-time. They earn a part-time salary. A city of Toronto councillor earns a full-time salary, and they should earn a full-time salary because they have very difficult jobs.

But to suggest that there can't be changes at the city of Toronto that will improve it I think is wrong. There are some 80 different committees at the city of Toronto. It's just staggering when one looks at the committee structure of the city of Toronto. There are 80 different committees that councillors have to sit on or are a part of. Maybe there's one councillor; in many instances, more than one councillor. There has to be change to that. No one would suggest that 25 councillors are going to have to cover 80 different committees, nor should they. But in the absence of making the change that has been required and showing the leadership through the city of Toronto—the Premier has shown that leadership.

Will there be an amalgamation of services within the city of Toronto? Yes, there will be. But members of Parliament in this House have been able to represent their communities very well. Members of Parliament in Ottawa have been able to represent their communities very well. Each of us, whether it's Liberal, Conservative or NDP, have done that, and we have represented our communities, I think, exceptionally well and have made great changes.

1650

One of the reasons why this is so important and why it's important for me as a member of provincial Parliament from York region is because decision gridlock in

the city of Toronto has an enormous impact on us in York region. When I was a member of Parliament, I joined Premier Dalton McGuinty, Mayor David Miller and Prime Minister Harper at the Sheppard bus garage, and we announced—I think it was \$1.2 billion for light rail along Sheppard Avenue, which was going to be built by 2010. It was great for my community because it would have given us access to different access points at Meadowvale and Morningside to get on Toronto transit. It's 2018 and it's still not done. It's expected to be done by—2033 now, I think, is the projected timeline for that.

We announced in co-operation with the then city of Toronto that we were going to increase transit in Scarborough with a Scarborough subway. The last time we built something in Scarborough was 1985, when there was the LRT that was built—1985. There are 700,000 people, I think, in the old city of Scarborough and they haven't had a new transit system built for them since 1985.

Well, the lack of a subway, the lack of that connection has made it increasingly more difficult for the people of York region to get connections to the rail or to the subways or the public transportation that we need. In my riding, Mr. Speaker, and some of the members of Parliament from Durham will know this very well—Steeles Avenue in my riding: I don't know how many times we have talked about this. In Durham region, where Steeles Avenue is completely within the Durham region area, it is a four-lane road and it has been rebuilt. Traffic moves. You hit the border of Toronto and Markham and it turns into one lane each way. The road has not been repaired. We have been studying it. York region has asked for it to be completed. We've said we would pay for it. But the city of Toronto simply cannot figure out what to do with it. They have studied this thing to death, and it harms our people. It is one of the most dangerous roads in all of Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

Ending gridlock at the city of Toronto is good for York region. It will make a huge difference in how our residents get around. It will mean lots for economic growth and development in our area of the GTA, as well. It will mean more economic development for the city of Toronto. We've heard time and time again how people find it frustrating to deal with the city of Toronto, given the amount of gridlock there. This will make big changes. This will help the entire GTA, Mr. Speaker.

It's very clear. Look, this is a big government. It's a \$12-billion government, if I'm not mistaken, in the city of Toronto. But as the city of Toronto goes, so goes the province of Ontario and so goes Canada. When we talk about the economic engine of Canada being Ontario, that engine is driven by the city of Toronto, and gridlock is what is hurting us. It's stopping us from growing the entire region, Mr. Speaker.

That's why, as a member of Parliament from York region, I'm so excited by the changes that have been brought forward by the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'm excited to get the job done because I know that over the next decade we are going to

see transit built like never before and we are going to see economic growth throughout the region. I appreciate the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Contemplating the substance of what we're hearing from the government on this issue is like contemplating Swiss cheese: It's full of holes.

Just listening to what I heard now, it's surprising to me that this government, Conservatives, are supporting appointments over elections. It is mind-boggling. And to hear the logic that councillors and mayors in these regions all of a sudden don't support elections, that they would rather have appointments—it's quite a double standard because not too long ago a consultation was held in the city of Toronto. I know because I worked there with a city councillor. The councillors favoured increasing by a marginal amount the number of seats, not reducing them. This obviously doesn't matter to this government.

To suggest the city of Toronto is dysfunctional is absurd. Each council meeting, they make hundreds of decisions. Bylaws pass and they pass quick.

Here—I'm a new member—I'm seeing things actually move a lot slower. They also progress very unilaterally because you tend to have majority governments. One side makes all the decisions and things go through. In the previous Conservative government, that meant burying a subway on Eglinton—since these guys want to talk about moving transit along. That included selling the 407. That included amalgamation, which was, in many ways, the cause of so much of the so-called “mess” Toronto has, downloading numerous costs onto municipalities. This is the legacy of unilateral decision-making.

In the city of Toronto, where there is lively debate in a non-partisan environment, so much gets done. I know this because I was there. I think it's really rich to hear this government speak in that way, denigrating the city of Toronto. It is an amazing place, and I believe in democracy in Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I am here standing in support of the changes to the size of Toronto city council, as well as the changes to regional council chairs, especially in York region. As I was canvassing during my campaign, people in Richmond Hill had been telling me time and time again to cut back the red tape in government and get things done. We are just doing that.

We have promised our people—actually, this is a promise made and promise kept.

Applause.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you.

I just want to say that when we do that—especially in Toronto, where we have so many councillors that decisions are being held up and the services are not being given out as efficiently as they are supposed to be, we really need this change. I'm so happy that we laid this bill out so quickly to get everything back on track.

I am happy that when we do this, we are committed to having the accountability and the trust of the people back in government and that we are going to reduce the costs. It's a lot of money that we are reducing. This is important for the people.

Just now, the member on the opposition side was saying that because we have a lot of people on this side of the House, obviously we can pass a bill. But it was the people's decision to select so many of us, because this is their wish. This is what they want: They want us to represent them, and we're just doing the job that they asked us to do.

I just want to say that we will be saving \$25 million for them over four years. It is a lot of money. Not only that: The deadline, we're going to keep it—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

Further questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to respond to the member for Markham–Stouffville's comments about Bill 5, the Better Local Government Act.

Speaker, I have to say, as education critic for the Ontario NDP caucus, how astonished I am to see this government ramming through an initiative like this—so anti-democratic, such an abuse of power—with absolutely no consultation. At the same time, they are putting the health and safety of young people in this province at risk because they claim to value consultation.

If this government actually valued consultation, if they were actually interested in hearing what the people had to say, they would consult with the people of Toronto about what kind of government Torontonians want to represent them. That's what the city of London did in 2006. When our community revised our boundaries for our municipal wards, there was an extensive consultation with Londoners about what kind of municipal council we felt would represent the concerns of residents fairly and appropriately.

The city of Toronto actually went through this process, Speaker. It was an extensive four-year process that resulted in an agreement that the number of councillors should be increased, from 44 to 47. One of the reasons why this is so important is because we know that women have a very difficult time getting into elected positions in municipal government. Increasing the size of council, ensuring that the number of councillors is appropriate for the number of people who are represented in any community, is critical to enable democratic representation.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further questions and comments?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have switched. The member for Scarborough–Rouge Park.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As someone who grew up in Scarborough, as I represent the great riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park, I believe that the Better Local Government Act will help improve

the efficiency of government, reduce the size of government and ultimately improve the service delivery of the government.

The reason why we are bringing forward this legislation is to enable the fifth-largest economy in this country to do the business of governing, serve the people, build transit and improve the lives of every single Torontonians. We believe in better government. However, an oversized council makes it almost impossible to build meaningful consensus and get things done. We are going to reduce the size and cost of Toronto city hall so that decisions can be made quicker while services can be delivered more efficiently and effectively.

On June 7, the people of Ontario made their decision loud and clear: To deliver our mandate for the people. We are committed to restoring accountability and trust in government. We also promise to reduce the size and cost of government and to end the culture of waste and mismanagement.

We are not spending \$25 million for more politicians. We need small government to function effectively and efficiently.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): That ends this session of questions and comments.

We return to the member from Markham–Stouffville to wrap it up.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be very clear. One of the members opposite talked about the appointment of a regional chair being anti-democratic. We have a regional chair under the previous proposal who has more power than a mayor, who has higher signing authority. We have councillors who are voted at large who represent no specific community and have no specific relationship to a ward or to a riding. We have communities within York region that have very different requirements and needs. We have some communities facing double-digit property tax increases. None of that was encompassed in the direct appointment of a regional chair.

The people of York region, the elected regional councillors and the elected mayors who serve on regional council have all said that we need to put a pause on this because there are very important decisions and other changes that have to be made to regional government before we go to the direct election of a regional chair. None of that was encompassed. To say that continuing on with the regional chair is improving democracy—it's just the opposite.

I've not heard one member of the NDP suggest how it is that we would bring truly representative democracy to York region. Are we going to allow the regional chair to continue to have enormous signing authority? Are we going to continue to have the regional chair be more powerful than any other mayor across the province? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. That's why we had to put the pause button on this.

With respect to reducing the size of councils: This isn't new. Constitutional convention in this country has been the same since Upper and Lower Canada were

created, for the first time creating one Parliament. We saw this again in 1956, when Metro was created, and we had smaller governments. In 1970, when Leaside was incorporated into East York, it meant smaller councils and fewer politicians, but the politicians we had were given more authority, more power, representing larger communities because it reflected their increased support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: It is a great pleasure to speak here in regard to this bill. This is a bill that boggles the mind. I was sitting here listening to the comments across the way and thinking about where to begin because this is legislation that is not just, I think, poor legislation, bad legislation, representing what I think are the really bad decisions that this government is making, but vastly undemocratic legislation.

As my colleague the member from Toronto–Danforth mentioned last week in this debate, I, like he, would oppose this whether or not it was being thrust at the city of Toronto at this point, in the middle of a municipal election that is already under way, in such an undemocratic fashion. Even if this legislation came forward four years from now or three years from now, I think I would still oppose it, because it's just a bad idea.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the issues around this legislation. First of all, as my colleague from University–Rosedale raised in a member's statement last week, the contrast with other municipalities—if you impose the same boundaries, the same formula of the federal-provincial ridings on other municipalities in this province, we end up with something absolutely ridiculous, like one city councillor in the city of Guelph.

I appreciate our leader this morning, the Leader of the Opposition, raising this issue with the Deputy Premier, about her concerns about why they would even be—rather, it was the member from Toronto–Danforth. Does this mean that they're going to impose a similar formula on other municipalities? I think we all know that that's never going to happen. Why? Because it makes no sense.

So why Toronto? This is, I think, the most challenging thing for the people of this city. It's what we keep hearing again and again. I know that the government opposite would like to think this is only an issue in downtown Toronto. I think they're going to find they're quite wrong about that. We're hearing it in neighbourhoods where, yes, they've been cynical in the past about politics and politicians. We're hearing it from all corners of this city, and that voice is getting louder. If I was a member of the government sitting opposite who comes from one of the ridings, perhaps, in this city, I'd be worried right now, because I think this is going to be something that comes back to haunt some members.

I also want to point out the absurdity of comparing the city council size in Toronto to city council size in New York or in Los Angeles. My goodness, just do some basic research. Those municipalities have borough councils and other levels of government that help them meet the needs of constituents—pretty basic.

So again, why Toronto? The government opposite says, "We're going to save money." What is it, \$25 million over four years? It's a drop in the bucket.

I wanted to speak a little bit more on that point, if I may. The Premier talks about \$25 million in savings to be had from slashing city council, and he does this by referencing his amazing record of saving \$1 billion from a city program audit he approved while on Toronto city council that actually only saved \$8 million. While that may seem like a lot to some people, when you're talking about a budget the size of the city of Toronto, it's not very much. Again, a drop in the bucket; really not much at all, and probably not even worth the cost of conducting it.

He holds this process sacred but ignores the very exhaustive Toronto ward boundary review recommendations on how to increase representation for the people of Toronto—a review that was initiated, let's remember, by his own brother when he was mayor.

The lack of consultation around the Premier's really undemocratic decision to slash access to effective representation for three million Torontonians can be understood, though, when we look at some of the backroom deals of this Premier. Let's think back to late in 2017. The OMB rejected the appeal of an earlier OMB decision by a couple of Toronto city councillors who wanted Toronto council slashed from 47 seats to 22. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? That sounds familiar: 47 to 22. Where did that come from?

The day after the Premier's plot to slash Toronto council became public, a small group of those same city councillors—again, shocking, unforeseen; couldn't have seen that coming—do a little media exercise down here to support the Premier's decision. Wow, shocking. These councillors made clear that they had heard from the Premier the night before his announcement. Nobody else seemed to, but those city councillors, strangely, found out about this—though apparently the mayor didn't, or anyone else.

1710

Two of these councillors were the ones who appealed the OMB decision. Let's remember: The OMB, in their decision, ruled that the move by the city of Toronto to 47 seats was the product of extensive public consultation. Wait, that's something that this government likes to talk about, Mr. Speaker. Public consultation is really important when we're talking about things like consent, or teaching kids that it's okay to be lesbian or gay or trans, or even just teaching them the basics of their sexuality, of gender identity. Those things—the basic sex ed curriculum in 2018—require the most expensive, most extensive consultation ever, but changing the fundamentals of democracy and how the people of the largest city in Canada and one of the largest cities in North America, how they are going to be represented in their communities, how they're going to get served when they're dealing with things like sewers and potholes and buses that don't come on time—when we're dealing with those kinds of things, no, no, no, consultation is not good enough for the people of Toronto.

Again, the OMB said, wow, extensive public consultation, including—and this is to quote their decision—over 100 "face-to-face meetings" with "members of council, school boards," stakeholders and 24 "public meetings and information sessions." Now, I've got to tell you, I've gone to a lot of public consultation meetings over the years. At many of them, sometimes you get a couple of people out, but these were something different. People really felt engaged. It really mattered, because the fact is that what happens at city council really matters in the day-to-day lives of so many, especially people who live in a big city like Toronto, where development is happening around the corner from you, where you may have a 40-storey condo tower pop up on the corner. You have no voice except for your city councillor pushing for community consultations, negotiating with the developer for affordable housing units, for community space, for public park space.

That, I have to say, I was struggling—what is the motivation again for this legislation, this really quite draconian legislation? What is the motivation here? I keep coming back to that point, because I know in my neighbourhood—which, again, is downtown Toronto; that's right. But so many communities across the city are like mine in that people are finding themselves confronting these kinds of developments. And I'll tell you something: People in Toronto, we don't usually balk at development. We get that if you live downtown, you know that there's going to be a condo tower probably coming up in your community. But you want some say in how high, maybe, and whether or not there's going to be any green space. Will there be enough child care spaces to accommodate those families?

And don't even get me started about whether those developers should have to pay some contribution to education in our communities, because this government, as well as the previous government, the Liberal government, refused to force developers to pay education development charges for our public school board in Toronto, which would have helped in some way—just some nod toward dealing with a \$4-billion capital repairs backlog, leaky roofs and playgrounds that are falling apart. This is not how kids want to go to school. We wouldn't want to go to work in that environment; we shouldn't expect kids to go to school in that environment. But no, we wouldn't want to ask the developers for that.

So I think, "Why? What is it that these governments, one after another, consecutive governments—why can't they just give developers that one little task?" Please, just a few pennies here and there, a little bit more for each unit that you build so that something will go into the schools. Why? It's because you like developers, right? They like developers, and they like to know that the developers—the free market is just going to figure it all out. Well, do you know what? That has not proved correct. That has not proved true in downtown Toronto. You can see it because there are no schools.

Downtown city councillors fought and fought with school board trustees to have a new school built, and it

was like pulling teeth. This took years, because all of these developments came about with not enough consideration originally, I think, given to where those kids were going to go school, where those families were going to seek child care. We have really tragic child care space shortages in this city. Waiting lists for waiting lists for child care, right?

We have schools that are bursting at the seams, and the only path to building new schools is selling our school buildings. Let me tell you, school board trustees and city councillors—I am a former school board trustee—are used to making some tough decisions. In my own community in my riding, we had to sell off seven and a half acres of public school land—an extremely difficult decision. It raised a lot of money. It raised more money than, I think, anything like that, more than any sale of public land has raised probably in Ontario in a very long time—\$122 million raised for the Toronto District School Board, with a \$4-billion capital repair backlog. So that \$122 million? Gone—poof, gone. You won't see that again.

The price we have already paid is enormous, and yet this government wants to, I think, maybe make it a little easier even for developers and make it harder for the community to push for any kind of community benefit in a situation like that. That is appalling. It's just simply appalling.

So I've been grappling with what is behind this. Is there any way to appeal to the members opposite to reverse their decision to move forward with this legislation? Because it is so antidemocratic and because, ultimately, the only people who are going to gain are probably the developers, on the backs of families who want to live and work in this city.

I was thinking about—again, why Toronto? Why Toronto? Some of it may just simply be wanting to create some chaos. I was reading with great interest this article in the Toronto Star today. It was a very interesting one because when you look at it, there is quite a lot of data. There are more polls coming out every day showing that, as Torontonians start to learn more and hear more about what the implications are of this legislation, they are increasingly disappointed, including a very large segment of the voting population who supported the members opposite in the election—and these are early days. They haven't even seen the chaos that's coming. They haven't even experienced it yet, and already they think they're making a big mistake over there.

I also just want to point out that you don't have to take Abacus or any of those folks at their word; you can even turn to the friends of the members opposite. The right-leaning Fraser Institute—oh, my goodness—said in a blog post that the council cut will not save taxpayers money in the long run, and it will reduce political scrutiny of the city budget, leaving important decisions to city staff over whom voters have no control.

A senior policy analyst at the Fraser Institute reviewed research of then-Premier Mike Harris's decision to amalgamate Toronto in 1998, another really impressive

move and decision on the part of the governing party at the time. Ostensibly, that was to save money. I remember those days. Believe it or not—it's hard to imagine, because obviously I was 12 at the time—I actually worked here in this building at that moment when that legislation was introduced. I recall that the big argument in favour of that amalgamation was saving money.

Here you have a top policy analyst from the Fraser Institute, who has reviewed the implications of that decision, saying that government spending per household on important services such as fire protection, garbage collection and parks and recreation has increased—yes, increased, not decreased. What? Say it isn't true. Oh, my goodness. I think that is actually a pretty interesting insight.

I also wanted to mention something that I was thinking this morning when I noticed that former minister John Snobelen was here this morning, as I recall. He was introduced by one of the members opposite. I was thinking of that very infamous political moment in his career, which was when he was filmed, shortly after he became the education minister in the Harris cabinet, saying that the government needed to bankrupt and create a useful crisis in the education system. What? Creating chaos? Why would a government want to create chaos? What could they possibly seek? In this case, he was talking about creating chaos in the education system.

1720

The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is: Given that the city of Toronto clerk's office has said that they will not likely have the time to implement the changes being imposed by Bill 5, it could be said that the Premier's unilateral move will create a "useful crisis" for the people of Toronto during this general election. For what? For the Premier's own political ends? It's like Godzilla crashing through Tokyo. It's chaos—chaos. Very convenient.

I also want to talk about—

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's hard in this case when somebody is talking so loudly over there, but we're talking about this creation of chaos and why he would want to do that. I keep thinking about something that my colleague the member from Toronto—Danforth talked at great length about last week, which is that settling of old scores. Let's just call it what it is. There's a reason the government opposite is not pursuing this in other municipalities. The Premier ran before for another position, let's just say, in the city of Toronto, and he didn't win. He was defeated.

Beyond that, and I just want to share—I'm going to read a little bit; I've got a couple more minutes left—something that the member from Toronto—Danforth said last week when he was responding to the introduction of the bill. He said:

"It is very clear that this bill addresses a number of interests of Mr. Ford: clearly taking control of the city; clearly making sure that the grassroots have less power; clearly making sure that the well-heeled and the well-connected are in a much more powerful position; and

clearly making sure that developers have a much freer hand in the years to come. But aside from all those things, this is about settling political scores; there is no question about it.”

He urged members of this Legislature and those watching to avail themselves of the nearest public library to read Mayor Rob Ford: Uncontrollable by Mark Towhey, somebody who, honestly, we have so little in common with, yet an interesting read; or how about *Crazy Town* by Robyn Doolittle—who, I have to say, happens to be a constituent of mine, so a big shout-out to Robyn Doolittle—to understand the milieu, to understand the kinds of people that the Ford administration has worked with and the kind of approach they have to power and politics, as they exhibited so clearly in this city when the Ford administration was in charge. It was a time of—there’s that word again—chaos. That’s right. It was a time of battles. It truly was a time of dysfunction.

But it wasn’t because we had too many councillors; it was because we had two people who were trying to ram through an agenda that disrupted the city. The city of Toronto noted this, and the city of Toronto was recognized around the world for this fantastic leadership—oh, yes. It was recognized as a place of chaos and dysfunction. The only thing, ironically, that saved it, that saved us all, was when the left, the right and the centre at city hall came together in opposition to what Mr. Ford and his brother were trying to accomplish.

So let’s call it what it is. This is about settling old scores with those very people. This is about creating chaos in the city of Toronto. All I have to say to you is, I hope we are—

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, a point of order, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Point of order.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Standing order 23(i) indicates that a member cannot impute false or unavowed motives. The speaker opposite—I’m hearing that in terms of the Premier of Ontario. For your consideration, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

The member has run out of time.

We’ll do questions and comments.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I listened to that speech very intently, and I note a few things. It comes down to this: The member opposite suggested that it’s about settling scores. I found that very, very interesting, because it seems to me to indicate that the members opposite have come to the realization that head-to-head against Conservative councillors in the city of Toronto—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: They can’t win.

Mr. Paul Calandra: —they don’t have a chance of winning. The people of the city of Toronto will always pick a Conservative over an NDP councillor, every single time. They are in a complete panic on that side of the House. That’s why they’re talking about settling scores, because they know that when the people are asked directly the question, “Would you rather have a Conservative or would you rather have an NDP?” they’re going

to vote for the Conservative all the time. Do you know why they’re going to do that? Because they like to have more money in their pocket. They’re going to do that because they like to have better services, Mr. Speaker.

Not one mention of York region in that. The economic engine of Canada is Ontario, and that has to be driven by the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It is in nobody’s interest to have decisions, such as repaving Steeles Avenue, on hold for 20 years. It is in nobody’s interest to have the Sheppard extension debated for 25 or 30 years. The people of Scarborough haven’t had a subway or a major transit expansion since 1985. That might be good politics on that side of the House. That might be what they think is the proper way of running things. But on this side of the House, we’ve said, “No. We’ve had enough. It’s time to move forward.”

It’s time to move forward, so I ask the members opposite: Stop worrying about the councillors that you’re about to lose in a municipal election. If they’ve done a good job, they will get re-elected, but your entire thesis of this entire debate has been on saving these councillors, whom obviously you have no confidence in, who obviously are going to be treated poorly by the people—and, Mr. Speaker, we’ve seen it. We’ve seen it because on June 7—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to speak on behalf of my constituents in London West to Bill 5, the Better Local Government Act. In particular, I want to commend my colleague the member from Davenport on her very passionate and powerful remarks. Certainly, she has lived experience as somebody who served on the school board, as did I. She understands the importance of local representation. She understands the importance of having a well-functioning local democracy, of having elected school board trustees working with local councillors to address neighbourhood issues.

I am fortunate, Speaker, to come from a community, the city of London, where we have 14 councillors and a population of about 280,000 people. From a representational perspective, that means that every councillor in our city represents about 27,400 constituents.

The city of Toronto currently has 44 councillors. Those councillors each represent more than 60,000 constituents. With this fundamentally anti-democratic proposal that the Conservative government is bringing in, each of the 24 councillors that they want to see elected will represent over 100,000 people. There is a fundamental principle of representation that is at stake here. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about the ability of elected people to listen to the concerns of the people whom they represent and to serve those people in a way that meets the needs of communities. That is what local government is about.

As a caucus, on this side, we respect local municipalities and we respect the role of local government, which this government obviously does not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's interesting to hear the members opposite talk about respecting local municipalities. Mr. Speaker, what about respecting the people? What about respecting the people who are paying millions of dollars for these salaries? If you talk to the average person, would they rather save 25 politicians and their jobs or would they rather save \$25 million of taxpayer money? I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, they would rather save the \$25 million.

When we're talking about fundamental representation, let's make one thing very clear: Toronto has 25 federal MPs, 25 provincial MPPs, and now we will have 25 Toronto city councillors. What's the issue? If it's good enough at the federal level and at the provincial level, why is it a problem?

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Why is the opposition party so intent and so focused on saving political jobs when they have no problem cancelling 7,000 jobs for the Pickering plant? To me, the members opposite need to get their priorities in line here, because if we're representing the people, then we're representing everyone.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, this act will be fair to current candidates. It will extend the nomination deadline to September 14, and it will allow current candidates the opportunity to choose where they want to run.

An oversized council makes it almost impossible to build meaningful consensus and get things done. As a result, infrastructure crumbles, the housing backlog grows and transit isn't built. Well, Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. We are here to make sure Toronto moves forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It's not very confusing. This member is tired of hearing nonsense every single day on this subject from people who know nothing about Toronto council but profess to do so. This is what we hear every single day. This was a fait accompli.

Harris comes in against everyone's will, amalgamates the city of Toronto against everybody's will, and says, "Hey, look, we can't pay our bills. Let's download it on the municipalities." Give your debt to your children and then say, "Hey, look, no more debt."

And then, after all that, we're dealing for years to try to figure out how to harmonize the zoning bylaws with the different boroughs in the city of Toronto.

We have a really, really difficult mayoralty that occurred previous to the one here. That is when, across the world, we heard about the so-called—I won't call it dysfunction, but whatever it was that was happening in the city of Toronto.

Interjection.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: The minister of heckling is weighing in again.

It's absolute nonsense. What is the basis for what they're saying? There is no basis. This is a government of nothing but slogans and nonsense. It would be like

waking up one day and we find out on CP24 that they sold this building because they have a mandate to reduce costs of government and we're going to be meeting on the sidewalk. That's how nonsense this government is—no logic, no nothing. All they do is get up here and repeat the same tired slogans over and over and over. They know nothing about what they're saying. It's the same thing.

Come up with some logical arguments for once, seriously. It would be amazing to actually hear that. You know nothing about the city of Toronto. This is small-minded, bitter, revenge, cheap, cynical politics. That's what it is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Before I return to the member from Davenport to conclude this part of the debate, I'd like to remind everyone in the House that it's action and reaction. The more you agitate, the more the other side feels a need to respond. We're not that far away from breaking for the day. I would ask everybody to lower the temperature just a bit.

I'll return to the member for Davenport to wrap up, please.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, well, it is a heated debate, I agree. And I feel for my colleague because I think that we, as Toronto MPPs, feel a particular responsibility to fight for our communities because they will be underserved.

I just want to address, before I go into my final comments, that when members opposite talk about the outcome of this next election—and I know that's what they're looking for, but just so we're all clear, I'm really looking forward to October 22 either way, because I don't think the members opposite have done the math on that one and where we're going to end up. But anyway.

I do want to just mention very quickly that I am very concerned about what this government is prioritizing in this province. The fact that this would be one of the first pieces of legislation, when we have forest fires blazing across this province—what was the latest? A hundred and twenty-seven forest fires; 19 of 42 that are blazing in northeastern Ontario have been deemed out of control. We just hear a couple of words, a couple of soft-lobbed questions over there on that issue. Come on; one person died.

Let's talk about social assistance rates, which this government is slashing. They can pretend it's about increasing the rates, but it's absolutely abysmal what they're doing to people who really are the most vulnerable. We have an opioid crisis in this city, we have school repairs that are absolutely critical and we have a government that's prioritizing rolling back the sex ed curriculum to the 1990s as a priority, when we didn't really even have cellphones that showed videos on them yet, and blowing up Toronto city council.

Well done, members opposite. You've really got your priorities straight.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Don Valley East, the member for Sault Ste.

Marie and the member for Kitchener–Conestoga will please refrain from debating across the aisle when another member has the floor. Thank you.

Further debate?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I will start this debate with a very famous line: Promise made, promise kept.

Mr. Speaker, we must respect the taxpayers. At the end of the day, they have chosen us—and I think this is what democracy is—to respect our taxpayers. It's for the people of Ontario that we all work, and that is exactly what we are doing in this government. We are respecting the people we represent and we are respecting their hard-earned tax dollars, which the government is spending. It's up to government at every level to make sure they spend taxpayers' money wisely—as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

I'm very fortunate to be part of a government that is working hard to deliver the benefits of those same principles to people in communities large and small and in every corner of this great province. Toronto is not an exception.

During the recent provincial election campaign, my caucus colleagues and I heard very strongly from Ontarians that they want us to respect those tax dollars and that government is supposed to work for them. I think Ontario sent a very clear message on June 7, that they want a government that looks after those taxpayers' dollars, and that is exactly what the government is doing by proposing Bill 5, appropriately titled the Better Local Government Act. That is what we are proposing: a more fiscally responsible, effectively run local government.

As I always say, "Promise made, promise kept." I know it hurts sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, we committed to restoring accountability and trust in government. We also promised to reduce the size and cost of government and end the culture of waste and mismanagement. Bill 5 would give the taxpayers of Toronto a streamlined, more effective council that is ready to work quickly, putting the needs of everyday people first. It will challenge the stereotype that politicians do nothing; maybe even break it—and I'm looking forward to that, Mr. Speaker.

An oversized council makes it almost impossible to build a meaningful consensus and get things done. Infrastructure crumbles, the housing backlog grows and transit isn't built or maintained.

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These issues are in the news consistently for Toronto. Reducing council size will save Toronto taxpayers around \$25 million over the next four years. They can reinvest these savings in their city.

Bill 5 also allows for a fair vote for Toronto residents. Currently, there are cases where one ward represents 80,000 residents and another 35,000. Some councillors acknowledge that voter disparity is a result of self-interest and that the federal and provincial electoral district process is better because it is an independent process. My question is, has anyone really read this bill? There was a clause in the existing City of Toronto Act,

2006, to address such an issue of too many politicians and gross spending. Why would the writer of this act include such a thing? To address the situation we are currently facing in Toronto.

Section 128(1) of the City of Toronto Act, 2006, was re-enacted. This section is re-enacted to set out rules that will divide the city into wards whose boundaries are identical to those of the electoral districts for Ontario that are within the boundaries of the city. For the purposes of subsection (1), the electoral districts for Ontario are those determined under the Representation Act, 2015, as it would be read on the day the Better Local Government Act, 2018, would receive royal assent. This will align Toronto with the provincial and federal systems, with 25 federal MPs, 25 provincial MPPs and now 25 Toronto city councillors. This would mean 75 political representatives at all levels within Toronto. How many more politicians do we need?

The current government is not drawing these numbers from a magical hat. We are using fair, well-researched and agreed-upon boundaries already used by the federal and provincial governments. Is the member opposite calling the current electoral districts unfair and unrepresentative?

The people of Ontario do not only expect responsibility and accountability on how their hard-earned taxpayer dollars are spent at the federal and provincial levels; they expect it also from their local governments. They expect their local governments to run efficiently. We are taking action to address issues that have been ignored for far too long.

As we know, local governments deliver many critical services to residents, and it's in everyone's interest that local governments work quickly, work efficiently and respect the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. Many politicians who have worked at the municipal level of government say the same thing: Municipal government is the level that's closest to the people, providing services that residents need and depend on for their everyday lives.

Our plan is to have these changes in effect for the upcoming October 22 municipal election. The election date would remain unchanged. Candidates for council would now have until September 14 to decide in which of the new wards they wish to run.

We are a government with a transition plan. We are a government with a plan. This gives candidates the time to consider what ward they want to run in and it gives them the time to work out the reporting and the expense side of it. Our government would work with the Toronto city clerk's office to ensure that candidates for municipal council or school board trustees are able to continue their campaign. Working with the clerk's office, we would assist the city's efforts to provide clear guidance and rules with regard to spending limits and reporting requirements.

Shrinking council size is not a new idea. Some Toronto councillors have voiced their approval for decreasing council size as well. It is not a power-hungry government

that is pushing their will on people, as the members opposite have continuously pointed out.

Ward 7 Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti said at the councillors' news conference, "I think it's quite clear that most of us up here have made speeches or have moved motions in the past that very clearly pointed to cutting ourselves in half because we are so frustrated with the system." That was his quote.

The Ward 24 councillor said, "The fact that our Premier, who has experienced all that frustration here, decided to move quickly and make the decision on that I think is absolutely right and I am 110% supportive of it."

Sensible solutions to this dysfunction are not new. Here is a quote from the Ward 11 councillor, who said, "When Mel Lastman was mayor ... we had 57 councillors, and at the time, there was a motion to reduce the councillors and we reduced it down to 44. And then when David Miller was mayor, we moved a motion to cut the council to 22."

Mr. Speaker, how can people argue against these comments? How can they argue against people who live with this every day at Toronto council? It works for the federal level. It works for us at the provincial level. Why would it not work at the municipal level?

My beautiful city of Mississauga has also been impacted by Bill 5. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, on August 2, while introducing Bill 5, mentioned that the proposed legislation has two parts. The second, if the bill is passed, will improve regional governments such as Peel, where my constituents reside. Our government for the people believes the regional municipalities of Ontario should be the ones to make important decisions about how they serve their residents. That includes how they select regional chairs.

Two years ago, in 2016, the previous government changed the Municipal Act to require that regional municipalities select their chair by election. Municipalities that used to choose to appoint their regional chairs were no longer allowed to choose. Four regional councils had to change their process. They were York region, Peel region, Niagara region and the district of Muskoka. We are reversing the 2016 changes for the 2018 election. In the future, regional councils will decide for themselves how to select their chairs. Going forward, we want to give that decision-making power back to the regional municipalities because they understand their system best.

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Regional government is a level of government that is closer to the people than you or I, Mr. Speaker. They deal with everything from garbage pickup to waste water, from policing to paramedics and from daycare to retirement homes. They know what their local communities need, and they are more than capable of deciding how their regional government should operate. This is something they did on their own for years, and we are very confident, Mr. Speaker, that they can do so again.

The current mayor of Mississauga, Bonnie Crombie, has been against the previous government's decision to force municipalities to elect their regional chair. She has

been quoted multiple times in the media as being against it, calling it "a solution to a problem we do not have." In fact, upon hearing about the changes that our government for the people is proposing, she is quoted as saying that this change "will signal that mayors and local councils are being heard on this matter." In fact, she also made Mississauga's feelings known, saying to the media that "Mississauga is the third-largest city in Ontario, and our council is perfectly capable of controlling our own destiny and working with the appointed regional chair to do so. In fact, in Peel, we voted 22-1 in 2017 against electing a regional chair."

This reinforces, Mr. Speaker, what we have been hearing all along. Regional governments need to be able to choose what is best for regional governments. They need to be able to take this to their councils and have a full discussion on the matter, to debate what is right for their communities.

We are not proposing something new; it is the way it was prior to 2016. We are just allowing municipalities to do what they have done before.

Proposed changes to the regional municipalities' appointment process of their chairs is not the only impact that Bill 5 has on Mississauga. Economically, the city is doing very well. The average household income, according to Stats Canada, is on par with Toronto's and substantially greater than the average household income for Canada and Ontario.

Due to Mississauga's close proximity to Toronto, many Mississauga residents work and play in Toronto. We know that the greater Toronto area's commuting times to work are the nation's longest. The average commute time from Mississauga to downtown Toronto is approximately 100 minutes, which is over 1.5 hours per day. The national average is 25.4 minutes, according to the 2011 National Household Survey.

There is a major condo project being launched in the community of Mississauga East-Cooksville—which is my riding, Mr. Speaker—which will attract many young professionals. Many of them, I assume, will be commuting to Toronto for employment.

A recent study of employees found that those with longer commutes are 46% more likely to get less than seven hours of sleep a night, the recommended level. At the end of the day, it's worse when we are commuting longer and longer and longer. Worse still, 33% are more likely to suffer from depression, 37% are more likely to have money worries and 12% are more likely to suffer from work-related stress.

Our government is committed to providing a better future for the everyday people of Ontario. Municipal governments are the level closest to the people, playing a large and important role in delivering day-to-day services. We want to ensure that we get those services to people in the most effective and most efficient way possible.

I think the people of Ontario sent a very clear message on June 7. They want a government that gets things done, and that's exactly what we are going to do. Promise made; promise kept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I beg to inform the House of good news and bad news. We've run out of time for questions and comments this evening.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): This House will stand adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1756.

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Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
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Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
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Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
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Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Amanda Simard, Gurratan Singh
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**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
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Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
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Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
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